

from Newark to
Newark

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From Newark to Newark

a peoples' history of Port Glasgow

**This book is dedicated to the many loved ones who have been lost over the years.
Their community spirit has built the foundations on which Port Glasgow sits**

Throughout the course of the project, a great many people have helped in one way or another. We would particularly like to extend our thanks to

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Above all, the advisory group and management team of 7½ John Wood Street would like to thank the project co-ordinator Kay Clark, who came to the project knowing, by her own admission, "absolutely nothing about heritage".

In the last 20 months not only has Kay become a font of local historical knowledge, she has also been a tremendous ambassador and visionary for local heritage.

The Bilin' o' the Bell

There's a Wee Port an' three things are its pride,
 First is the auld Newark Castle;
 Neist, whar the "Comet" was launched on the tide,
 First paddie steamer to ply on the Clyde,
 The outcome o' John Wood's sair wrestle.

Fill up your glass! Let the toast pass,
 "The couthie Wee Port whaur I got my lass!"
 Up tae your feet! Let it go roun'
 The couthie Wee Port! May God bless the auld Toun!"

Third is the Steeple, surmounts the Toun Hoose,
 Hamilton's maister han' plann'd man!
 Gracefully liftin it's spire tae the sky
 Ignorant folks the auld Port may decry
 Nane fi ner in a' the haill lan', man!

"Whatlike's a steeple without a gude bell?"
 An' the Laird o' the Loan sits him down, O!
 "The kirk tae ring in, an' the time for tae tell?
 I'm gey routh o' siller the noo, mase!,
 A new bell I'll gie tae the toun, O!"

Noo, the bell's cast an' it cam at the last,
 To Bailie Blank's yaird they hae ta'en it;
 He, dacent man, as his een owre it ran,
 Cried, "It might look a wee hewie mair gran',
 Wi' twa or three coats o' green paintit."

Cam the day roun', an' there's near half the toun;
 The Provost in finest o' fettle
 Taks the first pu' at the bell, dud-dud-dud;
 'Twas like a hammer on bit o' hard wud,
 An' timmer as ony tin kettle.

"Pit the thing richt!" said the Council that nicht,
 "Or we'll a' be sent packin' tae-well-o!"
 "Th' big vat, bedad! Whaur the paint aff we'll be scad!"

A new version of the song was recorded some years ago by local performer
 "Marky - Boy of Destiny" and can be heard on his myspace page
 (<http://www.myspace.com/markyboyofdestiny>)

So...why is this project called “The Bilin O’ The Bell”?

This book is one part of a major Heritage Lottery Fund project which celebrates the social history of Port Glasgow. The project is called “The Bilin’ o the Bell” and has been running since January 2008. It will finish in December 2009.

Most good Port folk know exactly why we named the project after an old folk song, but we have had plenty of people from elsewhere enquiring about it, so it seems only fair that we should explain it to those not in the know.



The project is named after a ballad about the rivalry between Greenock and Port Glasgow, and about Port Glasgow accidentally losing an important part of its heritage when the Town Council try to clean the town bell by boiling it.

It boils away to nothing.

At a time of so much new development and change in Port Glasgow, it's very important for the town not to lose any more of its heritage.

How Not To Boil A Bell - A Foreword

“History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

At a time when this town, this area, faces so many challenges, it is really easy to understand why heritage doesn't seem that important. Why worry about history when here and now jobs are being lost? Who cares about industrial landmarks when local businesses face closure? These problems, this gradual erosion of our entire community must be fought on all fronts - heritage is one way of doing just that. Our heritage can reconnect us to our community, give us a sense of place, of pride. It's what we have left of who we are, where we've come from. And it's the last thing we'll lose.

7½ John Wood Street has always had a real belief in the importance of local heritage - the name itself is a historical reference and before the centre had even opened its doors, we had got permission from the Imperial War Museum to display copies of Sir Stanley Spencer's "Shipbuilding" paintings. When we finally did open, one of the first evening groups to run in the centre was a six week course on local heritage.

7½ has always maintained that "regeneration" - whatever that happens to be, can only be meaningful with one foot in the past. So, after a few years of occasional exhibitions and events, we decided to give Port Glasgow's heritage the focus it deserved and applied to Heritage Lottery Fund to run a two year programme.

In the last 20 months, this project has worked with a whole range of Portonian volunteers to run exhibitions and events, record reminiscences, research centuries of books and decades of old newspapers, film and edit documentaries, explore historical sites, take folk on boat trips - it even made it onto both BBC News and Scotland Today. This book is the culmination of all of that work, and brings the "Bilin o the Bell" project to its conclusion; everyone involved is justly proud of it and what it represents.

But it certainly does not claim to be the definitive history of Port Glasgow - if there ever could be such a thing.

It is a celebration, a people's history at a point of significant change and regeneration for the town. You may remember some things differently, you might think lots of things have been left out, you may not believe some of the stories, and that is precisely as it should be; heritage and history are human pursuits, and none of us are perfect.

Nor is it a book to be read only by Portonians sitting in Port Glasgow, reading about Port Glasgow. We've already had people from America and Australia enquiring about where to get this book - and quite right too. This book will help people celebrate the proud heritage of Port Glasgow right across the world, and who knows, perhaps folk may even read it in Greenock.

The best thing a project like this can achieve is to inspire local people to undertake their own research and to continue sharing their own memories and stories with the people around them - this community deserves nothing less. There is no better time to start than now.

Paul Bristow
August 2009



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John Wood and the PS Comet

"We certify that in the year 1811 we built for Mr Henry Bell, engineer, a small steam vessel of 40 ft keel, 10ft 6in beam, called "**The Comet**", she being the first vessel in Scotland, and that Mr Bell was the first person who projected and carried into effect in this Kingdom the use of steam vessels, which followed immediately his steps, and have proved, and are likely much further to prove, of such amazing importance. This certificate was given at Mr Bell's request, and for his use as he sees fit."

"John Wood & Co" Port-Glasgow, 10th October, 1826

John Wood, born 1745, became foremen carpenter in Thomas McGill's yard in Port Glasgow. By 1781 he had his own business in the Port. John purchased James Muir's shipyard, at the west end of the town. He was contracted to build Henry Bell's steamship **The Comet** which was laid down in October, 1811. John died on 22nd November and his son John completed the launch of the vessel on 24th July 1812.

Steam Passage Boat, The Comet

Between Glasgow, Greenock and Helensburgh,
for passengers only.

The subscribers having, at much expense, fitted up a handsome vessel to ply upon the River Clyde between Glasgow and Greenock - to sail with the Power of Wind, Air, and Steam.

The elegance, comfort, safety and speed of this vessel requires only to be proved to meet the approbation of the Public; and the Proprietor is determined to do everything in his power to merit public encouragement.

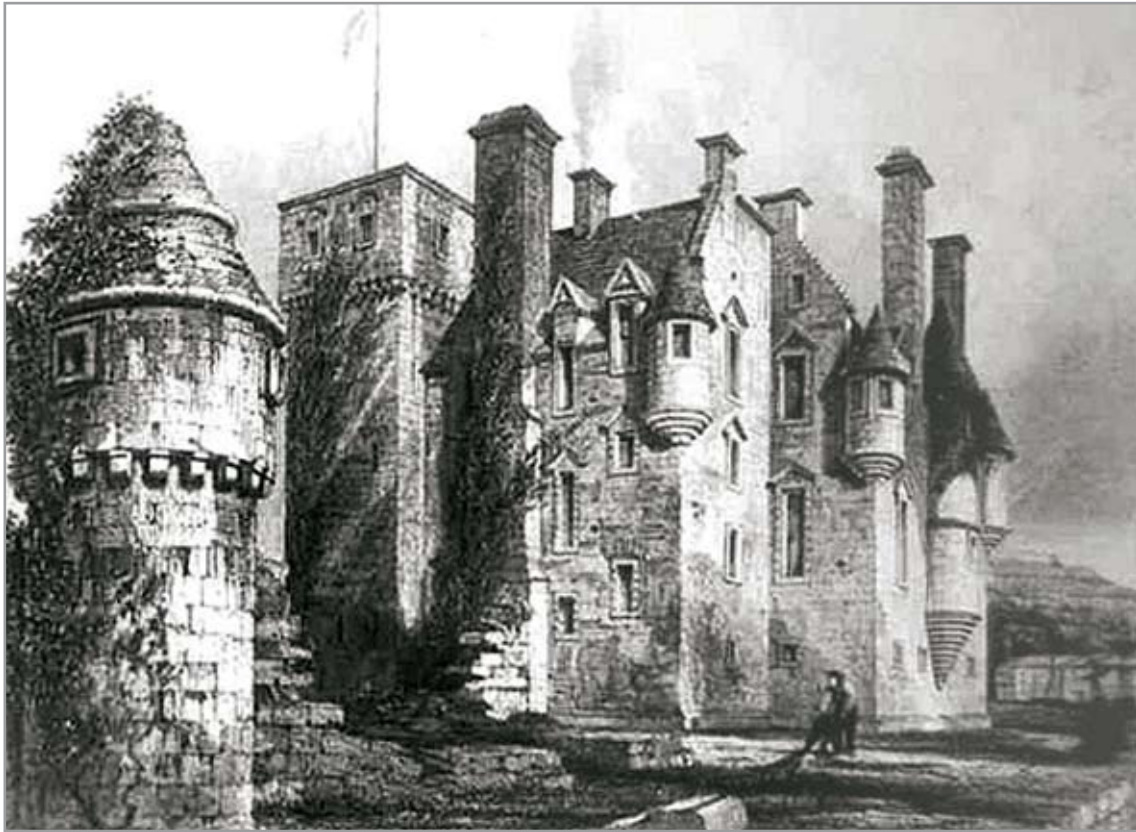
Passengers by the Comet will receive information of the hours of sailing, by applying at Mr Houston's Office, Broomielaw; or Mr Thomas Blackney's, East Quay Head, Greenock.

Henry Bell.

On her first voyage down the Clyde, from Glasgow to Greenock, two gentlemen landed at Bowling, and there and then paid the first fare in Great Britain for a passage on board a steamer.

From the castle to the school

by Hugh McIntyre



Newark Castle

Sometime before 1484, George Maxwell built the tower which now forms the south-east corner of the castle.

This may have been the original New-erk of Finlayston, or else simply an extension in fortified style of a place where the Maxwell's had lived since the start of the 1400's. Certainly George was styled George Maxwell of New-erk of Finlawstoune-Maxwell. His grandfather, Robert Maxwell had married Elizabeth Denniston, daughter of the Laird of Finlayston, in 1402, and in 1405 Elizabeth inherited that part of Finlayston, with her sister, on her fathers death.

Whatever existed on the site before the castle proper will have been the Old-werk, perhaps a dwelling house for the new laird of the place and his wife? The New-werk became Newark, and the name attached itself to the small settlement that existed around it, possibly from long before. Its name, if it had one, has been lost.

That the settlement did exist is indicated by the presence of a Chapel of Ease endowed by the Dennistons of Finlayston in the 1300's, to ease the burden of travelling to the Church in Kilmacolm.

King James IV was in residence at Newark in May 1495 and he visited again in 1497.

In 1909, following an attempt by a shipbuilder to buy the Castle, Sir Hugh Shaw-Stewart handed it over to the Crown Commissioners to ensure its preservation. Sir Hugh also gave a sum of money to enable the old St. Andrews (pre-union) flag of Scotland to be flown from the tower daily.



Newark castle, circa 1972
sandwiched between yards

"Who built a castle between two shipyards" is a standing joke in Port Glasgow.

The castle was hidden from view between two shipyards, and only accessible via a narrow lane, or from the river. Now, of the latest yards to occupy the sites, Lamonts has gone and only Ferguson's remains.

The castle can be seen from the road again, possibly the only benefit gained from the decline of shipbuilding in the town.



Castle Street, showing Lamonts Shipyard in 1980, just after closure
the narrow alleyway leading to Newark Castle started from the corner on the left



the castle as we know it today, with visitor car parking in the foreground

The lawless Port

by Hugh McIntyre

The citizens of old Port Glasgow, both men and women, were sometimes quite disrespectful of the law.

"A RABBLE DID CAUSE EFFUSION OF BLOOD IN GREAT QUANTITIES" -1707

In 1707 the government, by the law of Scotland, banned the import of "foreign manufactories, victuall, butter, cheese, horse, nolt, and beef." Appointed as Commissioner to oversee the application of this law was Sir John Shaw of Greenock and his assistant on the ground was Matthew Craufurd, in Wood of Easter, Greenock.

It came to their attention that Gavin Pow, a merchant who traded in Scotland and also between Ireland and Scotland, had imported prohibited goods into Port Glasgow and, in July 1707, Shaw instructed Craufurd to apprehend Pow.

Pow was in Port Glasgow, in the house of Robert Rodger, a merchant, where he was duly apprehended. A rabble hostile to Craufurd gathered outside.



In the case that ensued, Craufurd's evidence was that Robert Rodger "did illegally and unjustly open his house door and let in (the rabble) and.... he and John Lyon, merchant in Port-Glasgow, with the said rabble, did ding and beat (me) to the ground, and give (me) many black and blue strocks.

"And did rescue the said Gavin Pow, ye prisoner and (me) being going with Duncan Wright in Port-Glasgow to his house for shelter the defenders with staffs and other instruments, such as ane pair of tongs, pursued (me) to the house door of the said Duncan, and did fall on me, and there did batter, blood and bruise me to the effusion of my blood in great quantities."

Rodger and Lyon pleaded provocation, saying Craufurd's behaviour led to the affair. The Commissioner and the Procurator Fiscal asked for heavy fines, but none were imposed. One reading of the verdict might be that the Sheriff declared a draw.

The matter ended there.

“MOB ATTACK ON CUSTOM HOUSE OFFICERS” - 1717

The smuggling of brandy, tobacco and rum was widespread on the Clyde, looked on as an activity to be engaged in by respectable merchants in pursuit of profit. The land-surveyor (Customs official) at Port Glasgow was Robert Cochran.

On the 7th of July, 1717, he and his officers took possession of smuggled goods at Newark and were attacked by a mob with “clubs, rungs, stones, and other invasive weapons.”



The mob “beat, bruised and wounded the persons of ye said Custom-House Officers, or ane or other of them, and by force and violence caryd off, away tooke from the said Officers, the tobacco and brandy seized by them as non-entered goods, and did use and dispose of the said goods without any authority in law, to the value of ane hundred pound sterling or nyrbv.”

So said the evidence at the court case that ensued on the 15th of July at Port Glasgow.

Of the mob, those charged were the following ladies:

- Susanna Vauss, spouse to Joseph Swynburn, sailor in Port Glasgow
- Anna Leckie (Leslie), spouse to George Johnstoun, sailor in Port Glasgow
- Jean McMaster, spouse to James Hunter, carpenter there
- Margaret Hunter, daughter to the deceased James Hunter, sailor there
- Margaret Hunter, daughter to William Hunter, flesher there
- Grissell Cochran, spouse to Ninian Hill, mason there
- Issobell Craufurd, spouse to Robert Wattson, boatman there
- Issobell Wattson, spouse to Ard Kelburne, sailor there
- Mary Moor, spouse to William Stirratt, merchant there
- Euphan Johnstoun, daughter to the deceased George Johnstoun there
- Katrin Taylor, spouse to James Tinklar, horse hirer there
- and several husbands for their interests.

All denied the charges.

The verdict delivered two days later was that “the delinquents Grissell Cochran, Margaret Hunter daughter to William Hunter, Margaret Hunter daughter to James Hunter, Issobell Craufurd, Susanna Vauss, Anna Leckie (Leslie), Jean McMaster and Mary Moor did come with a great many more in a Mob, etc.”

Each was fined 5 pounds sterling, and the husbands of those who were married were made liable for the money. The ladies were taken to prison, there to remain till the fines were paid, or till sufficient guarantees were made for payment.

There is no mention of any punishment to Euphan Johnstoun and Katrin Taylor.

“A QUARREL BETWEEN SHOPKEEPERS” - 1732

Martha Rolland, a spinster, and Marion Cochran, a widow, were local shopkeepers who disliked each other a lot.

In 1732, probably late in the year, Marion had been given three small casks of spirits (probably smuggled) to sell for others and, after selling two of them, was to keep the third to sell for herself. The people who had left the casks with her happened to be in Martha's shop, and Martha took the opportunity to tell them they had little chance of getting their money from Marion. On hearing that, they took the third cask away from Marion.

A major quarrel ensued between the two ladies, with violence and strong words. Each raised an action against the other.

Martha claimed that, "Marion Cochran... having taken up ane groundless malice and ill will against me.... did on Saturday last, the 16th instant, under cloud of night, In a passionat and furious way and manner, thrust into my chop.... And exprest herself thus: the filthy blecken'd face slutt that she was, Is wearing head cloaths of a french cut, but if ever she saw her wearing them again, she should tear them all to pieces

"And.... gript me.... by the head cloaths and tore them off my head, and beat and bruised me on the shoulders to such a degree that I was forc'd to run from her and make my escape bareheaded.... following me doun the closs to my sisters house, continewed beating me upon the head and shouders, swearing by her maker that she should have her will of me & be about with me another time... "



Marion's counter-complaint says of her that, "the Complainer, a widow, and having a fatherless child, does, in order to their livelyhood and subsistence, take a shop which she hath kept for many years of selling some small things, and the Defender, being a very near neighbour to her, hath off a long tyme continued in a conceived malice and prejudice att her and her customers...

"...by giving her bad names att many tymes and occasions, such as blackned, idle, debauched limmer & drunken slutt, and offered several tymes to spitt in her face, and alwayes is in use to abuse her child, a young tender boy, called Thomas Richardson, by pulling off his bonnett, throwing it to the ground, and giving him many ill names, such as dirtey, nesty boy or rascal, and continues in dailly discord with the Complainer, by using all means to ruin her credite and reputation... whereby the Complainer is in danger of being reduced to much bader circumstances than what she is in at present."

Marion Cochran was fined 10 pounds Scots, and both ladies were told to keep the peace for a year or else pay 20 pounds Scots.

"ATTACK ON THE TOLLBOOTH" - 1802

Greenock Advertiser Friday 9th April, 1802

"A riot of a serious nature happened here, on the evening of Monday last se'ennight. An attack was made on the Tollbooth and Guard-house, by a number of wickedly disorderly women, ever ready to promote mischief, aided by a number of sailors and trades-people who were goaded on to it.

"Their object was to liberate two deserters from the Driver sloop of war in Leith-roads, secured here in consequence of a printed information from the Captain of the Driver, and they had actually begun to destroy the prison, by means of firing a cannon, and using spars and ladders to force both sides of the prison, when the chief magistrate, aided by a few volunteers, interfered and luckily succeeded in dispersing them.

"One of the female ringleaders was afterwards posted in the jugs, and several others of both sexes have since been punished by fine and imprisonment for this daring outrage. A company of the Glengarry Fencibles have since arrived here, to assist in preserving peace. Much later in time they were still at it, but they hadn't the same style."

**"IT WAS THE ORANGE PEEL" - 1909**

"Philip McGhee, carter, was charged with having been found in a state of intoxication and incapable of taking care of himself in Ardgowan Street on Saturday night.

"The accused pleaded guilty, but said that just as he was passing the greengrocer shop down there he slipped upon a piece of orange peel and his elbow went through the window. He was in a job, and was willing to pay for the window. Under these circumstances he was allowed to go with an admonition."

"A LIVELY WOMAN FROM KING STREET" - 1909

"Archibald Whiteford, Charles Murray and Archibald Mulholland were all charged with failing to keep the back court at 6½ King Street in order. Neither of them appeared, but their wives stood at the Bar. They were told that they would require to go home and send their husbands, whereupon Mrs Mulholland addressed the court like a regular suffragist.

"She said, 'My husband cannot come. He's got a job noo. I think we are plenty in debt after being eighteen months without work, without bringing our husbands to the Court and keeping them aff their work about the washin' o' stairs. I never kent it was a man's job to wash stairs before. And as for that close o' oors, suppose you kept a constable at it from six in the morning tae twelve at night, it would not be a bit better; for so mony come an' staun in the close.'

Said Bailie Steele, 'I think you are a McGarrigle?' Mrs Mulholland, 'Yes, thank you for knowing me.' The Bailie, 'Your husbands will require to come back next week.' Mrs Mulholland, 'I'll no be here next Thursday, and neither will my husband, for he's gaun up the watter.' And with this oration Mulholland led her two neighbour women down the stair to the Fore Street."

"THE POTATO HUNT
A great experience
Wild rush of women and children"

Port Glasgow Express, Friday May 11th 1917

"There were exciting times on the Kilmacolm Road one day lately. Women and children and peramulators were seen to be making for the Boglestone direction helter-skelter, shouting and screaming. They had been on the hunt for potatoes, and plenty of them.

"Each woman and child had a bag, while some of the women were making room in the prams for the expected supply. The women at the farm told them there were no potatoes to be had. It is alleged that some women from the Port had the appearance of being the worse of a dram.

"They kept pushing their bags in the womans face after she had assured them that all the potatoes not used for seed had been sold out. The women from the Port refused to leave .

"'Well if you don't go...' said the woman of the farm, '...I'll turn the bulls and the kye on ye'



"This had no effect upon the famine stricken women and still they refused to leave; but not for long. The byre doors were opened and out rushed the cattle. They knew their job and made charge right for the crowd.

"There was a hurried stampede for the Kilmacolm Road, and great was the commotion as the motley crowd headed towards the ancient Bogle stone. As none of the cattle were of the dunching order the crowd escaped in safety.

After a rest by the wayside they resumed their way homewards by the Clune Brae ruminating over their exciting adventure."

The water supply

by Hugh McIntyre

In earliest times the people of the area would have got their fresh water from the nearest burn or spring and there were plenty available, with perhaps a small dam to ease the burden. Wells will have been dug, from when it is impossible to be sure, however an account of the town written in 1782 has this to say about water.

“About ten years ago, the water was conveyed from an excellent spring, about half a mile to the southward, by wooden pipes to the said town, when about three or four years ago, the town got an act of parliament for several privileges from the city of Glasgow; when afterwards they got leaden pipes in place of the former wooden ones, and built a large reservoir 10 feet 2 inches deep, and between 17 and 18 feet diameter, holding betwixt 74 and 75 tuns of water, all covered with lead, having a little house, of rubble-work, built around it, being confined under lock and key, with a fine canopy above, and a passage round, secured by a wooden parapet, the baliustrade contains 34 wooden ballusters at 19½ inches asunder.

“There is deposited, within said house, a crystal glass for strangers to drink with. The water is conveyed from thence to every place mostly in the town, where the people are supplied by eight public wells built with good cut stone, having two cocks each; besides they have the water deposited in several places, when, by taking off the plugs, they can be supplied with water in case of accidents by fire, to serve the water or fire-engines.”

The “water deposited in several places” will have referred to tanks or other containers.

List of Private Water pipes 1851	
Names	Remarks
George Bell Provost	In Montgomerie St Deacons Court Newark Street
Mathew Brown & Co	
Charles Williamson	Free Church Deacons Court (school)
Mrs Mc Murtrie	
Misses Boyd	
George Bell	
Gourock Ropework Co	
James Laide	
William Ewing	
Mrs A Brown	
John Fleming	
John Laird & Sons	
John Livingston	
Robert Muir	
Commissioner of Customs	
John Reid & Co	
Miss Crauford	
Archibald C. Laide	
Miss Campbell	
Mrs D Ritchie	
Mathew Laird & Co	
Samuel Fyfe	
William Miller	
Mrs Ritchie	
Miss Neisons Trustees	
Revd John Henderson	
Dr.D Reid	
Richard B H aggart	
Provost	
Thomas Bonar	
A & P Nesmith	
Trustees of Cowan Paton & Cos Estates	

The extension of the south eastern wall of the Parish Church grounds (now St Andrew’s) used to go right up to the wall that ran, and still runs, up the hill from the railway bridge at the end of Chapel Lane. The reservoir was situated at the junction of the two walls.

The 1856 Ordnance Survey shows a number of wells, and some of them will still have been in use at that time, for at least one is noted as a “dry well”. It is not clear if some wells were actual holes dug into the ground, or if all of them were supply points “having two cocks” giving water piped from the reservoir.

The account would support the latter interpretation. Even after water was piped into houses in the town, the water tap was commonly referred to as “the well”, a habit that has persisted to the present day.

The street wells were communal wells as an interesting, if uncomplimentary, comment printed in the Greenock and Port Glasgow Argus made clear in 1850.

TWELVE MONTHS IN PORT-GLASGOW.

To the Editor of the Greenock and Port-Glasgow Argus.

SIR,—A residence of twelve months in Port-Glasgow, (which I am happy to say is now finished,) and all the Pickings I could collect, are not at all in favour of the local management of the place. Although heavily taxed, the inhabitants are poorly supplied with those articles for which the taxes are paid,—heavily charged for gas, yet poorly supplied with that commodity. Visit the public wells at whatever season of the year you may—whether in the abundance of rain (and we all know it is not the rarest article in that locality), or in the scorching sun of summer—and you will find your ears somewhat deafened with the noisy clatter of those whose tongues are compared to perpetual-motion, collected in such numbers around the wells, that you would almost consider them as stationary manufacturers to the Water Company. It must materially damage the domestic affairs by having the mothers stationed for hours at the public well, waiting for the water necessary to cleanse themselves and houses from accumulated filth. But if some of the “Big Wigs” were as anxious to see to the comfort and well-being of the whole community in supplying them with water, as in supplying their own properties, such complaints would not be called for.

In reference to the gas, I defer saying anything, as alterations are making in that department, the result of which, we hope, may be to cheapen it; however, we patiently wait the result.

D. P.

In 1811 there were at least 17 private water pipes in the town, charged at rates from 10 to 30 shillings per year. In 1851 there were 32. The owners of these will have been the “Big-Wigs.” It is not known how the system operated - the water may have been on only at certain times of day for private and communal wells; that was certainly how the early gas supply was regulated.

Up until 1831 the quality of the town's water supply must have been excellent.

In that year, John Marshall, a doctor in the town, wrote that he had settled in the town in 1816, and only in 1825 and 1826 did he see any sign of the kind of disease that we now know is acquired from infected water, such as dysentery or typhoid, and these were the only cases since 1761.

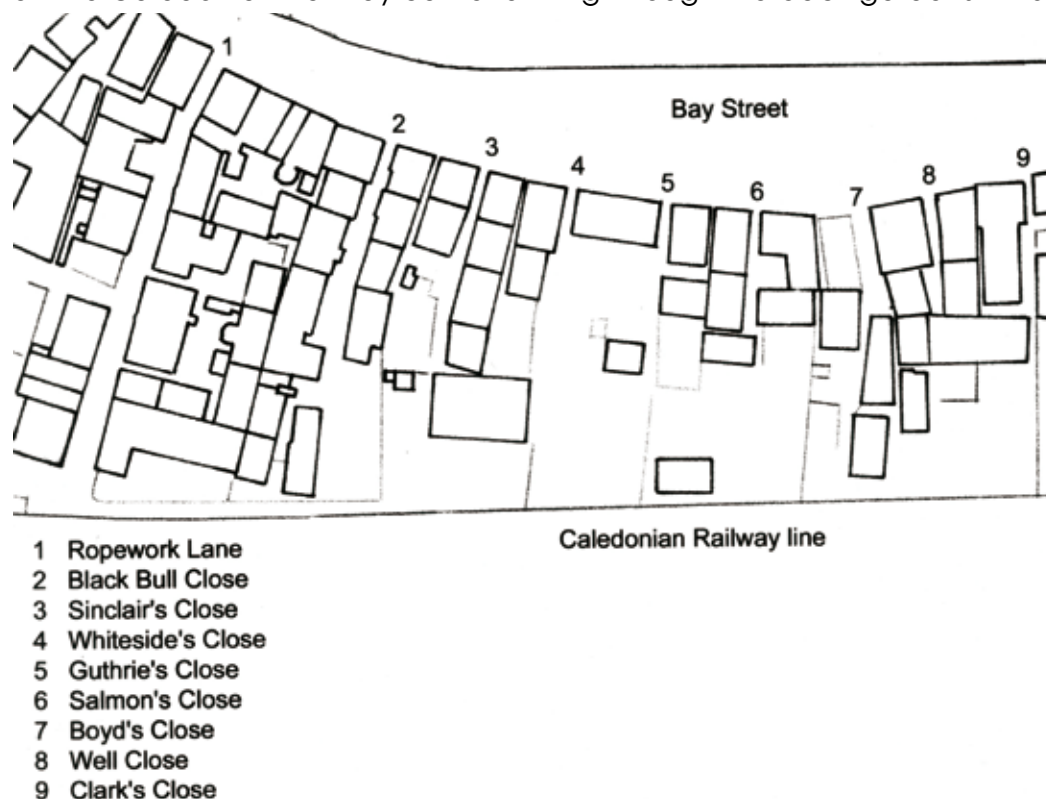
He attributed this to the fine situation of the town and the healthy air.



The phases of the bay area

by Hugh McIntyre and Jim Devenay

The Bay area, with Newark, was the oldest part of the town and it grew up gradually. It was created over a couple of centuries, in contrast to today where whole estates are built at once. It was all swept away in the early 1900s with redevelopment, the only major changes to it had been when the Caledonian Railway came running through the back gardens in 1839-40.



Originally the street had houses with the gable ends towards the road and a very narrow space between, so every so often there had to be a passageway or close (closs in the old style). The gardens or rows behind the houses were long and narrow. There may have been a "backrow lane" running along the top end, but that would not have survived later developments like the ropewalk and the railway.

The map shows the old closes or closes on Bay Street. There were none east of Clark's Close. The curve of the houses preserved the original line of the bay, after which the street was called.

All of the town's streets along the riverside bordered the river with nothing between them and the water. Today, everything between the roads and the river is reclaimed land.

The photograph below shows Bay Street as it was before 1909 - some of the buildings were unchanged from the original village. This was to soon change as following an inquiry held in 1903, under the Housing of the Working Classes Act (1890), the Bay area was declared an insanitary area and was scheduled to be demolished.



Bay Street, pre-1909

The second phase of Bay Street was built to replace this area. The Act said nothing about rebuilding the area after demolition, so the Town Council did not take up the challenge. Instead, the financial burden of the rebuilding was largely borne by the Lithgow family.



Bay Street, post-1909

The new Bay Street was built on the original line with two streets, Victoria Street and George Street, running up to Station Road which, as its name implies, ran to the Station. It did so from the top of George Street along beside the railway wall. John Wood Street was the western end of this development.

Although the new buildings were undoubtedly superior in their day, the 1958 Statistical Account gave this somewhat patronising view of them.

"Most of the four storey tenements in the town were built in the later nineteenth century, with additional building in the early part of the present century, when the old closes and dilapidated houses in the Bay area of the town centre were demolished and substantial four-storey sandstone tenements of two and three apartments, entered from balconies overlooking the back courts, were built in their stead.

"These houses are all solidly built and look secure enough to stand for centuries. But they are small, seldom with more than two rooms, very seldom with a bath and often without indoor sanitation. The closes and stairways are often dark, with long lobbies reaching from the stair-head.

"Very few stairs have only two houses to a flat; three is more usual and often there are four. Where there are lobbies there may be as many as six or seven houses to a landing. In a tenement there may thus be thirty separate houses, all approached by the one close. To live in such congested conditions cannot be comfortable.

"Yet, while some tenants come short of a desirable standard in housekeeping and tidiness, most of the houses are kept with commendable care and are a credit to housewives, who take real pride in their homes."

In addition to the above criticism, the sight of the back courts from the train aroused feelings of dismay in the breasts of some who feared the effect it might have on tourists. Inevitably, a need for further redevelopment was identified, and after 1909 the Bay area was demolished yet again, stopping only at John Wood Street.

In the late 1960's, in line with the rest of the area, three high rise flats were erected - Rowan, Heather and Thistle Courts.

Realignment of the A8 blocked off access from Bay Street to Robert Street, and the removal of the smaller buildings associated with the Gourrock Ropeworks (when that establishment ceased trading) all but put an end to Bay Street's life as a street.



Rowan, Thistle and Heather Courts today

At the east end of the street today, the main building of the Ropework has been preserved and made into flats, but its security fence and gate rather cut it off from the area.

The three high rise buildings would seem to be all that remains of an unrealised proposal for a radical redevelopment of Port Glasgow..

In 1968, Concrete Scotland Limited used a model as part of a presentation to Port Glasgow Town Council on a vision for a future Port Glasgow, doubtless built by themselves.

This never materialised and the three courts are all that remain of the, in its day, futuristic vision.



models of the Concrete Scotland proposal for the proposed late 1960's renovation of the town centre

MEETING OF HOUSING COMMITTEE

Bay Area Development

Present

- Provost Brownlee
- Bailie Stanton
- Bailie McLean (convener)
- Bailie Rodger
- Hon. Treasurer Ballantyne
- Dean of Guild Jamieson
- Councillor Clark.

Attending

- Town Chamberlain
- Burgh Surveyor
- Housing Manager
- Sanitary Inspector
- Direct Repairs Supervisor
- Mr A. Mitchell, Concrete (Scotland) Limited
- Mr Rankin, Architect.

The Committee viewed films and slides provided by Concrete Scotland Limited, showing the Bison wall frame system of construction, after which Mr Mitchell and Mr Rankin dealt with a number of questions on the system with particular reference to the Bay Area Development.

Mr Mitchell intimated that piling work was to start very shortly and if the work went according to plan, the first block would be handed over to the council next August.

The convener, on behalf of the members, thanked Mr Mitchell for his attendance and expressed the hope that the association between his company and the council would be a happy one.

Mr Mitchell withdrew.



Some of the photographs show a sandy beach area and note the disappearance of shipyards much the same as today.

The model also shows the development of at least seven high-rise flats and John Wood Street is no longer there.

Family photos

by Jim Devenay



Jim Devenay's Great Grandmother, Maryann Cochrane, nee Kitchen, stands at the top of the stairs with family and neighbours at the Black Bull Close, Bay Street in the 1890's.

The next two images show the area known as Dungannon Court and which maybe got its name from the many handloom weavers who lived there





The photos below depicts Falconer Street which is named after Mr Archibald Falconer first provost, who occupied the civic chair from 1883 to 1848.





4½ King Street



42 King Street



Back court, Scarlow Street



How to populate a town

by George Gorman



The woman at the top of the stairs wearing the black shawl is Mrs Mary McGarry (nee Sharkey). She came to Scotland (Port Glasgow) from Ireland in the early 19th Century and took up employment at the Gourrock Ropeworks.

She married John McGarry in 1884, also from Ireland and latterly took up employment in one of Port Glasgow's many shipyards.



Mrs McGarry is seen here with their seven children in 1903. Their eldest son Charles was killed fighting in the First World War.

The boy on the far right is my grandfather Neil McGarry.



The above image shows Susan Wilson (nee McGarry) celebrating her 50th Wedding Anniversary with two of her siblings, her children and extended family.

Susan had 16 children, 71 grandchildren and 120 great-grandchildren; this shows how one woman can be a large contributor to the population of Port Glasgow. One of Susan's many great, great-grandchildren is Danny Lee Jr from a well-known boxing family in Port Glasgow.

Susan's anniversary celebration was one of the first functions to be held in the new Clydeview Roadhouse opened in 1956-57 and was built on the site of the Clune Brae Toll House that was still standing in 1950.



Many of the grandchildren were too young to attend the function. Instead they were taken on an outing.

The Gourock Ropeworks

by Jim Devenay



The Gourock Ropeworks was founded in Cove Road, Gourock. Another ropeworks, originally named the Port Glasgow Rope and Duck Company operated at the Bay Street site. It was owned by Glasgow traders who sold the company to the Gourock Ropework Co, which then consolidated the entire company at the Port Glasgow site in 1797.

Initially it manufactured ropes only, but later diversified into producing canvas and nets.

Many families can recall connections with the Ropework, as family members or friends took up

employment at the Mill, which was owned by the Birkmyre family. The Birkmyres also built the housing at Bouverie, which was to house the many Mill workers and their families.

Some members of the Heritage Group can trace back generations of Mill workers



Frank Kinney (left) born in Ireland in 1840, came to Port Glasgow in 1871 and spent all his days at the Mill. He retired with the position of Foreman and died in 1913

Jim Kinney, his son, was 2 years old when his father came to Port Glasgow. He too worked at the Mill and was employed as a mechanic.

Jim died in 1939



"Mrs Mary Kinney started work in the Mill on her 14th birthday March 1st 1888. The day started at 6.00am and finished at 5.30pm; as a beginner she earned 3/6d per week.

"Mrs Kinney was dismissed for a breach of factory discipline at the age of 57 after 43 years service. She was discovered cleaning her machine as they were being run down still in motion.

"During the Second World War, at the age of 69, she returned to the Mill and did her daily stint in the arcade."

The Gourock by George Blake





"Most women workers of that distant period wore the traditional garb-shawls that could be drawn over their heads in wet weather or even used to hammock an infant. It appears that the girls in the Sail Loft, enjoying better pay than their sisters wore bonnets and white starched blouses as a badge of superiority."

The Gourcock by George Blake



“A STRANGE TEST OF A PORT GLASGOW-MADE TENT”

Greenock Telegraph

“The current number of the Free Church of Scotland Monthly publishes intelligence from Africa in the district of Livingstonia looking for a site for an institution in which they hope to erect this. From the article in the magazine referred to, they seem to have at least one perilous night. It is told as follows.



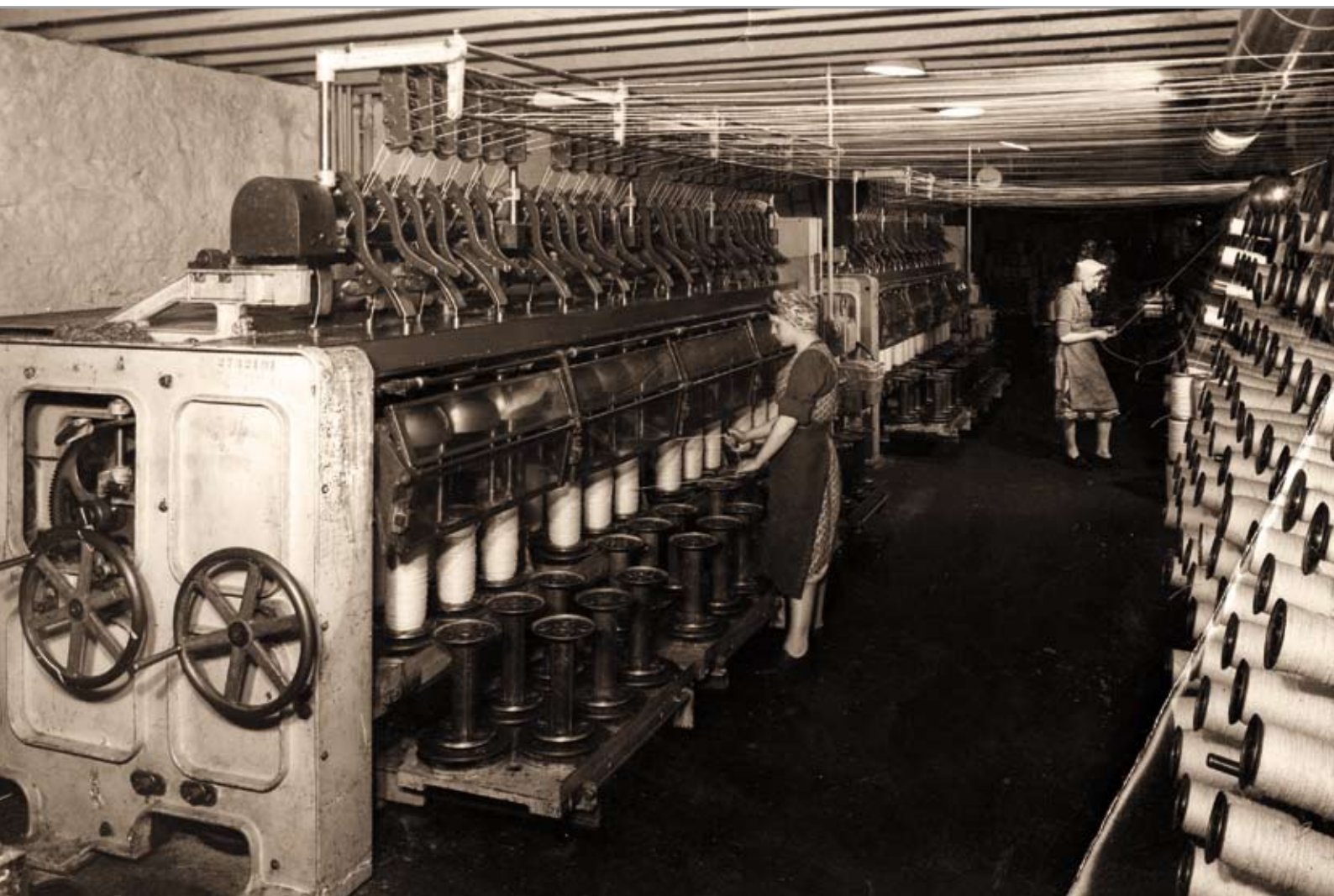
“On the journey, Dr Laws had an adventure with a lion. He was suddenly awakened at 2am while asleep in his tent, by hearing the roof of the tent being ripped open by a lion, and saw the beast’s head right over his face. ‘Lions are known to roar’ says Dr Laws, ‘but that night Dr Elmslie and myself did the roaring, while the lions were silent.’ Luckily the noise frightened the fierce beast away. It was a narrow escape. Had the tent not been strong and well sewn, and well pegged down, as it had been the previous evening, it is probable that Dr Elmslie and Dr Law would have lost their lives.

“‘I have been much struck since then,’ say Dr Laws, ‘by thinking how far reaching the effects of good or bad work may be.’

“‘Attached to my tent was a label with two names on it, probably the name of two Port Glasgow girls who sewed the tent, and months after their work passed out of their hands it was tested by the saving of two human lives. So much for the means, but behind all was the shielding care of our loving Almighty Father’

“The tent, it may be added, was made in the works of the Gourock Ropeworks Company. It appears to be the custom to attach a label to each tent bearing the names of the two girls who had sewn it, so that any defect might be traced back to its source. It is gratifying to hear, instead of defects, the work of the Port Glasgow girls so highly spoken of. Unfortunately, the names of the two girls in this instance have not transpired.

“We understand, however, that efforts are being made to find them out and, should this be accomplished, we would not be surprised if the two girls might receive some little gift to help them to spend the Fair in the acknowledgement of the excellence of their workmanship.”



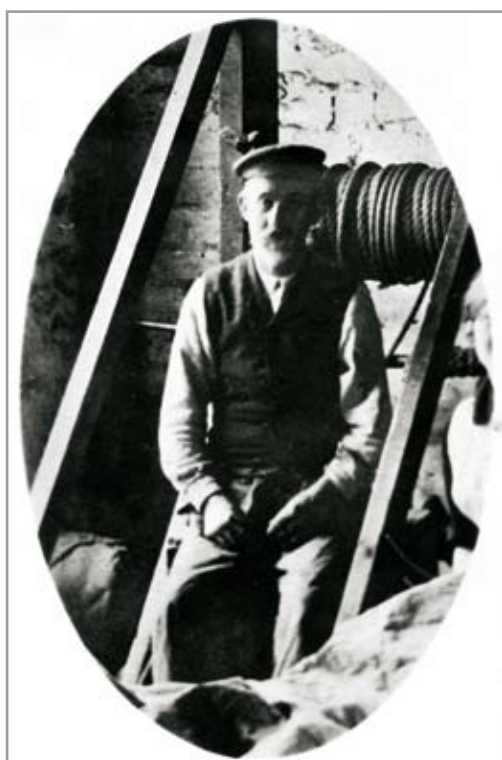
Mortimer Dougan

by Rab Kane

Mortimer Dougan was my great granddad. Born in Port Glasgow during 1886 to Irish parents, he started his working life as a labourer in the Shipyards where he stayed for about five years.

He then went on to find a job in the Gourrock Ropeworks, starting in the Flax Shed but eventually ending up in the Long Walk (the Long House) that ran alongside the railway from the Mill to the Port Glasgow Railway Station.

His job description was a stretcher which involved laying out lengths of twine and attaching one end to a static anchor and the other end to a spinning machine, which spun the rope before tying off the ends. Sadly my Great Grandad was drowned in the West Harbour in 1898. He was only 42 years old.



7, DECEMBER 5, 1898.

PORT-GLASGOW.

BODY FOUND ON CARDROSS SHORE.

The body of a man was last night found on the shore at Cardross, and is supposed to be that of Mortimer Dougan, labourer, Gillespie's Lane, who went amissing on the evening of the 12th ult. The Dumbartonshire County Police communicated with Inspector Thrift this morning, and friends of Dougan left for Cardross to-day.

BODY IDENTIFIED.

The body of the man found on Sunday night on Cardross shore was yesterday identified as that of Mortimer Dougan, labourer, who went amissing on the 12th ult. Deceased was forty-two years of age, and has left a widow and family.

THE POLICE COURT.

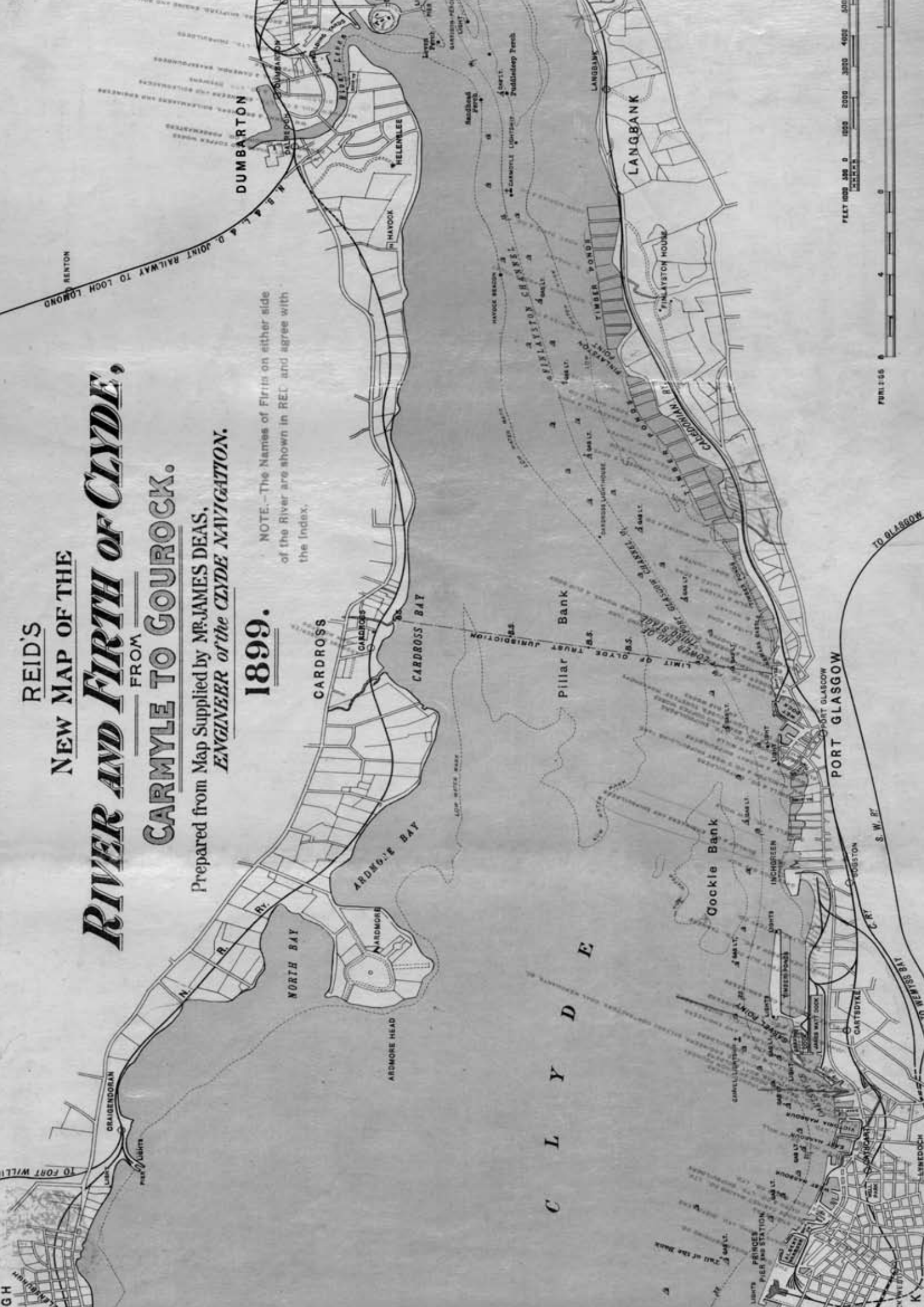
There can be no doubt about it, if the absence of the usual diet of Police Court held on Mondays since the weekly pays set in does not point to a moral neither does it adorn a tale. There is a good deal of suggestion in the story of the woman when asked how she liked the weekly pays, and replied that she didn't like them at all because she used to get a bating once a fortnight, but now the chastisement of her husband was upon her once a week. Now the reason why the absence of the Court on Monday

REID'S
NEW MAP OF THE
RIVER AND FIRTH OF CLYDE,
FROM
CARMYLE TO GOUROCK.

Prepared from Map Supplied by MR. JAMES DEAS,
ENGINEER of the CLYDE NAVIGATION.

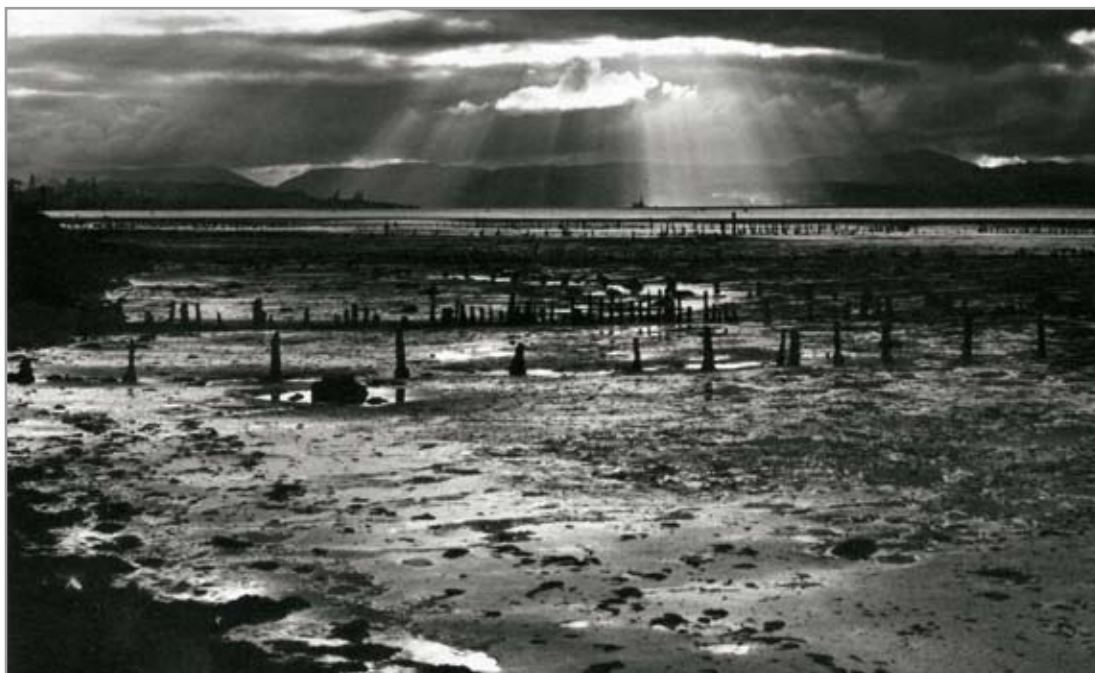
1899.

NOTE.—The Names of Firms on either side of the River are shown in RED and agree with the Index.



The timber ponds

According to Archie Maynard, in an article written for Scotland's Magazine (July 1969), the timber ponds date from about 1790. Timber started arriving from Canada and the USA as squared logs, which were the full length of the tree, instead of as cut timber (deals), as was the previous practice.



Licensed timber measurers assessed, graded and measured the timber as it was unloaded out of the ships through bow ports, affixing metal plates to the logs, or otherwise identifying them. The logs were assembled into rafts by rafters who were skilled at such work, then towed to the ponds for storage. Mr Maynard said of the timber ponds that they were, " a giant graveyard the rows of stumps, the headstones of an era gone forever."

Powerful shipping and timber merchants, such as Pollock, Gilmour & Co, had places in the timber areas, eg, Miramichi in New Brunswick, Canada, and they would have received orders from Clyde based timber merchants, some of whom may have run sawmills, and the latter would have dealt direct with the shipbuilders or other customers.

There were sawmills serving the ponds, situated on the Port Glasgow Road around Inchgreen. These were actually in Greenock, where their situation will have been dictated by direct access to the railway that was available there via a spur line. Some shipyards had their own small timber ponds in the yard, and a sawmill with which to process the timber. Early photos of the Port Glasgow harbours show cut timber being stored in them, a practice that might have preceded the timber ponds.

Reid's New Map of the River and Firth of Clyde, from Carmyle to Gourock, 1899 (previous page), shows thirty two timber ponds existing at that date, running from Newark Castle to Langbank, and rented by nine different firms of timber measurers : John Mories & Co, Robert Davie & Co, R.B. Hagart, Greenock Harbour Trust, Holm & Fraser, Robert Hunter, Neil Brown & Co, John Laird & Sons, John Carswell & Sons.

John Carswell & Sons were in Port Glasgow till 1929, when they transferred to the Great Harbour in Greenock and worked till 1941.

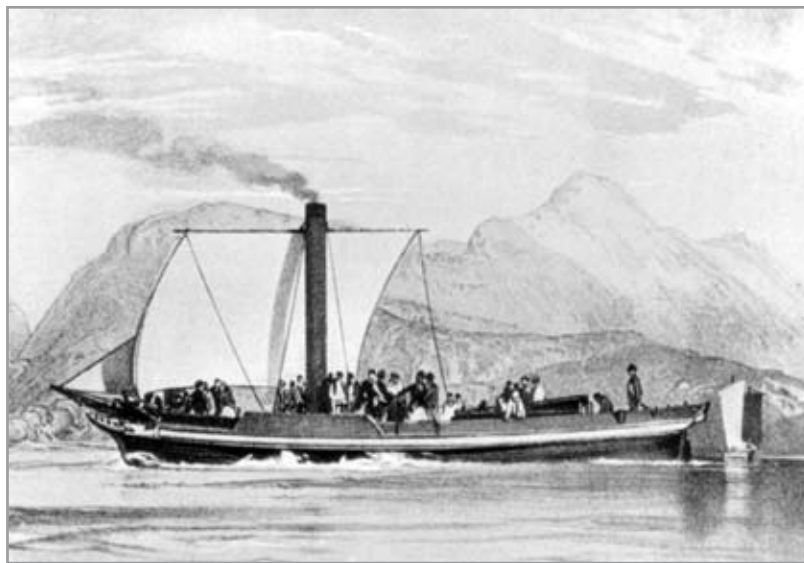


John Wood and the Comet

The Comet is a name of which Port Glasgow is immensely proud, in fact the community organises an annual festival to celebrate its very being.

Across the dual carriageway in Port Glasgow is the launch site where, 197 years ago, the first steamship slipped into the waters of the Clyde. That launch was to rock the shipbuilding world and the tiny boat built by John Wood of Port Glasgow was to become the mother of the British Steamship.

Henry Bell, designer of the Comet, had a vision which was to become an anchor in the history of Port Glasgow and the primary player in the creation of the first passenger steamship. Bell was born in Torphichen near Linlithgow in 1767. He trained as a millwright and, fascinated by machinery, he worked as an engineer in Glasgow. In later life, Bell became an Hotelier in Helensburgh and decided to put his vision into plans, which he worked on for many years.



The hull of the boat was to come from John Wood, Port Glasgow, and the engines from John Robertson, builder of pumping engines, in Glasgow. David Napier was to make the boiler. The Comet was launched on 24th of July 1812 and achieved a place in history as the first steamship to be run commercially in Europe. The Comet sailed for Helensburgh the same day. She was officially christened in August 1812. Persons taking the trip to Glasgow would be charged 4 shillings and the journey would take 3 hours.

The Comet was lifted onto the rocks at Craginish Point, near Oban in 1820 and although no-one was injured, the Comet's sea life had come to an end.

As mentioned, the person who connected the Comet with Port Glasgow was John Wood.

John Wood (1788-1860) lived at the corner of King Street and Scarlow Street. His father, John Wood senior, had been employed by McGill - the first shipbuilder to be mentioned in Port Glasgow.

When John Wood Senior died in 1811 he had already contracted with Henry Bell to build the Comet. Wood's sons John and Charles who had encouraged their father to take on this contract, were responsible for completing the craft after his death.

Over the years, the community of Port Glasgow has invested in memorial plaques both to John Wood and the Comet.

“THE JOHN WOOD MEMORIAL - SOMETHING NEW AND HANDSOME”

Port Glasgow Express Friday 20th, July 1917

“In the course of a few days you are about to witness a transformation scene in Shore Street. The walls, which for so many years have formed the frontage into Shore Street of the old established firm of Robert Duncan & Co., are to come down and the new walls will be open to view. This will give a considerably widened street.



the Comet stone in its original location

the stone has since been removed and after languishing in storage is now adjacent the Comet replica in the Civic Square

“The new Caithness pavement is not likely to be laid until that most eventful period in the history of the universe, the end of the war and may that day be soon. In the meantime however there will be a broad pavement covered with sashes. The people will have room to move about and the existing congestion will be a thing of the past. You may have noticed that the plate, which was so inartistically placed on the wall opposite the entrance to St Johns Church, has been removed for some time. It was no credit to Port Glasgow to honour one of Port Glasgow’s greatest sons so meanly.

“But this reproach is about to be removed. When the old wall comes down something new and fitting of the memorable event will meet your gaze. You will see a handsome memorial to the great pioneer of steam shipbuilding, the revered John Wood.

“A carving of the old Comet heading down channel will surmount this. Then on each side are two figures carved in stone emblematic of the shipbuilding industry, one a carpenter and another a homely blacksmith. The carving work is in Grecian style supported by two columns and an ornate capital with moulded bases. The old plate, which has been removed, will find a place in the central part of the work. No use for further collaboration.

“You will see it all some day soon yourself. The cost of this handsome memorial is being defrayed by the owners of the works, who are carrying out extensive alterations and great improvements on the old establishment.”

"THE COMET CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS IN PORT GLASGOW"

Port Glasgow Express August 31, 1912



Comet centenary celebrations, 1912

"In a few weeks the Comet centenary celebrations will be in full swing. Every town and village in Strathclyde will be dressed in its best buntin. The United Kingdom and indeed the British Empire will glory in the grand achievement of John Wood and his workmen in Port Glasgow one hundred years ago.

"Port Glasgow is undoubtedly the home of the first steamship in Europe, the Comet, and surely this undisputed fact and the many wonderful achievements in shipbuilding which followed it should inspire this little community of ours with patriotism, with pride and desire to honour the memory of the departed who have done so much to bring lasting glory to our town, to our country, to humanity."

Port Glasgow is well known for the landmark, which is the replica of the Comet. The vessel has been moved a few times but now rests in the town's civic square. Lithgow funded this memorial, which was to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Launch of the Comet.

"A PROUD AND GREAT DAY AS THE COMET SAILS AGAIN"

Greenock Telegraph, Monday 3rd September 1962

"Port Glasgow folk and their 150 years after the Comet let off steam on Saturday. It was fantastic – almost indescribable display of civic pride."

"On Saturday, however there was certainly no emptiness about the Port, literally thousands crowded the streets as the gay procession of fancy dressed floats, uniformed organisations and bands filed past, winding like a gaudy snake through the main thoroughfare from Woodall to Kingston Basin.

"Former Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr John S. MacLay, resplendent in a period costume, joined in with all the gaiety that such an occasion called for. The launching of the full-scale replica of the Comet from Lithgow's East Yard was performed without a hitch.

"What could have been a better way to end this day of days than the large fireworks display which began in the evening at the Mid-Harbour near the Municipal Buildings.

"As the stars and spangles burst against the black velvet background of sky to cascade slowly downwards crackling and whining like comets, the Port folk really came into their own, and the 150th anniversary of that brave ship drew to an end.

"But not quite an end, for on Sunday a commemorative service was held in the Old Port Glasgow Church".



soon after launch, the Comet replica takes to the waves surrounded by a flotilla of small vessels



the Comet replica as it currently rests in the newly refurbished Civic Square

Famous people

James Thomson, poet

Port Glasgow's James Thomson should not be confused with another Scottish poet of the same name (1770-1848) who wrote *The Seasons* and the lyrics for *Rule Britannia*, or indeed the English poet, Francis Thomson (1859-1907). The booklet written by Janetta Bowie - *The Port, Past - Present, 1775-1975* - suffers from the latter mix up.



James Thomson (1834-1882)

James Thomson was born in Port Glasgow on the 23rd of November 1834, to James Thompson, a mariner, and Sarah Kennedy. Like well nigh everyone in the town, the parents were incomers. James senior was born in Perthshire and came to Port Glasgow as a child, Sarah was born in Blantyre and they married in London.

James Junior was born James Thompson, but lived most of his life as James Thomson, as will be explained. The exact location of his birth is not known for certain.

In 1906, Mr Charles Brodie wrote an article saying that, through a stroke of luck he failed to explain, he'd managed to prove the location was in the building at the head of Church Street, in a house that was removed to make room for the heightening of the roof of Mr John Gibbs shop.

In the photo below, taken in 1961, the shop that was Gibbs' is on the corner with Princes Street, in line with the van parked on the left. Immediately after the birth, the family moved to the Black Bull Close, where he spent his childhood.

In 1840 Sarah moved to London with her son and a younger daughter, her husband being at sea. In the same year James senior suffered a stroke on board his ship which left him paralysed down one side. The family's circumstances went downhill after that, and an application was made to have the young James admitted to the Royal Caledonian Asylum.

The institution admitted for the education and support of the children of, among others, "indigent Scotch parents, resident in London, not entitled to parochial relief." James was admitted in 1842 and his mother died six months later.

During his stay in the Asylum his name on the record was changed for some unknown reason, possibly a mis-spelling, from Thompson to Thomson and it remained that way for the rest of his life.



Gibbs' shop 1961

In 1850 he left the Asylum and was appointed as an assistant to a teacher in Ireland. For some years he had been reading widely and writing poetry, and in 1852 when he was aged eighteen, he wrote a poem of which the first few lines are

**Still thine eyes haunt me; in the darkness now
The dreamtime, the hushed stillness of the night
I see them shining, pure and earnest light**

After the death of his mother, his father became increasingly burdened by his paralysis, falling into what his son described as a permanent madness of mind. He died on Arran in 1853.

In 1855 his cousin, Helen McClarty, married John Birkmyre at Scarlow Street in Port Glasgow. John was a younger brother of the better-known William of the Gourock Ropeworks, but the circumstances did not affect James Thomson's life at all. He and Helen met only once as adults.

He travelled a lot, and he was in the military for a time, but for much of his life he remained in London reading, writing, researching and socialising. He called himself B.V Thomson to avoid confusion with his earlier namesake. B.V stood for Bysshe Vanolis, Bysshe being a nod in the direction of Percy Bysshe Shelley, a poet he much respected, and Vanolis, an anagram of Novalis, a German poet.

His first published work was in a magazine in 1858. Of his poems, the most famous is 'in the City of Dreadful Night' which is a very long, powerful and pessimistic work. Its third verse starts.

**Surely I write not for the hopeful young,
Or those who deem their happiness worth,
And such as pasture or grow fat among
The shows of life, and feel nor doubt nor death**

One of his shorter, more lighthearted poems 'In the Train' could be found in standard books of poetry used in local schools.

**As we rush, as we rush in the Train
The trees and the houses go wheeling back
But the starry heavens above the plain
Come flying on our track**

**All the beautiful stars of the sky,
The silver doves of the forest night,
Over the dull earth swarm and fly,
Companions of our flight**

**We will rush on without fear,
Let the goal be far, the flight be fleet
For we carry the Heavens with us, dear
While the Earth slips from our feet.**

James became a heavy drinker – he died of the effects of excessive drinking on the 3rd of June 1882 at University Hospital in London. There is no record of him ever returning to the town of his birth, and no records exist of any memorial having been erected to him there.

Elizabeth Wood Inglis

Miss Elizabeth Wood Inglis was born at Ivybank Port Glasgow in 1854 and died on the 25th of November 1936 aged 82. Daughter of David Inglis, writer, and his wife Janet (nee Gilkinson), she was granddaughter to Rev. Dr David Inglis of the UP Church, Port Glasgow (later the Princes Street Church).

Her obituary in the Greenock Telegraph stated that she had earned the title of 'Grand Old Lady' of Port Glasgow. It went on to say "Miss Bessie Inglis, as she was known, gave notable service to the cause of temperance. She was past president of the local branch of the B.W.T.A. and fought hard to reduce the number of licenses in the Burgh.

"Through this work, she was well known in both the local Licensing Court and the Appeal Court, where she appeared on many occasions in the role of objector. Miss Inglis was past president of the Nursing Association and also the local branch of the Scotch Girls Friendly Society. She also took keen interest in Child Welfare."



The Elizabeth Wood Inglis memorial well as it stands today in the Coronation Park

In October 1937 Port Glasgow Council received a letter from Messrs. Inglis Glen & Company stating that the relatives of the late Miss Elizabeth Wood Inglis, of Woodbank, Port Glasgow wish to commemorate her lifelong attachment to the town and they desire to ascertain whether the gift of a memorial drinking fountain would be acceptable on a site to be chosen by the Town Council.

Initially the proposed plan submitted by the Master of Works placed the fountain in Coronation Park, this was amended by the Council with a request that the plan be submitted to place the fountain at the head of John Wood Street.

Following several meetings and discussions, which included members of the Town Council, the Chief Constable and Inspector Reid meeting at the proposed site in John Wood Street with a full sized model in canvas of the proposed memorial, the

Council agreed that the memorial would be erected on the west side of John Wood Street. It was also understood that the Council would maintain the memorial after it was erected.

In October 1938 the Council received a letter from agents appointed by the representatives of the late Miss Inglis intimated that the memorial fountain had been completed.

A further report from the Burgh Surveyor was submitted stating that the memorial had been erected on the site according to the design approved by the Town Council.

As we know the memorial fountain was moved and now stands in the Coronation Park as was originally intended.

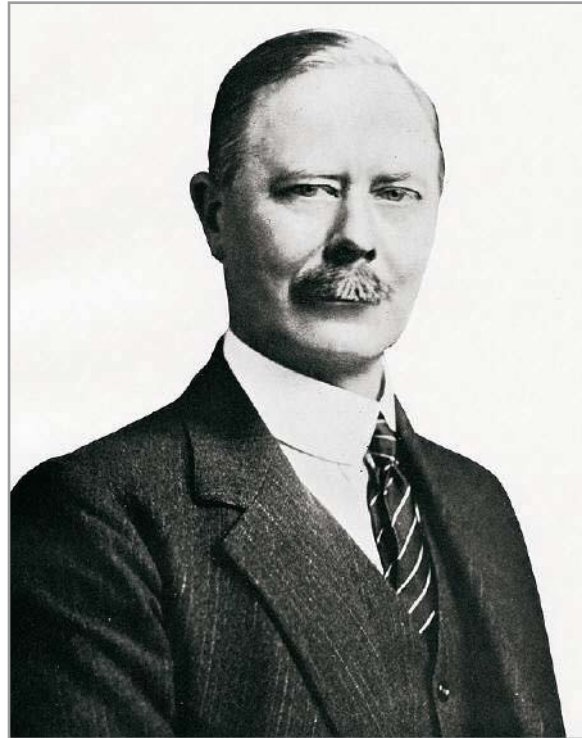
Sir James Lithgow

"MULTI-MILLIONAIRE WHO WAS PROUD OF HIS BIRTHPLACE"

Greenock Telegraph, Saturday 23 February 1952

"Sir James Lithgow, the first and only freeman of Port Glasgow and Industrial King of Scotland, died early this morning at his home, Gleddoch House, Langbank. He was in his 70th year and had been of ill health for some considerable time.

"His passing will be deeply regretted in Port Glasgow where he was held in the highest esteem not only for his many beneficiaries but for his close personal interest in the town & its citizens.



"Sir James was always proud of the fact that he was a Port Boy and he was jealous of the neighbouring town's reputation and identity, a feeling that prompted him to oppose and successfully stifle the Greenock attempt to amalgamate the adjoining burghs in 1927.

"Born in Port Glasgow in 1883, Sir James was educated at Glasgow Academy and in Paris. Many elderly Portonians remember him as an apprentice, serving his time with Russell and Co, the shipbuilding firm of which his father had become sole owner. Afterwards Sir James and Mr Henry Lithgow joined their father and the firm became Lithgow's Ltd.

"During the 1914-18 War he commanded No. 40 Siege Battery, in which many local men were serving. He was awarded the Military Cross.

"Sir James received his title in 1925 when he was created first Baronet of Ormsary. In 1945 he was made a Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire, and in 1947 was given a CB, also known as "The Most Honourable Order of the Bath".

Glasgow University conferred on him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws in 1946.

"The times he lived through were not easy. He was tired, especially during the depression when work was hard to come by and fierce competition from abroad had to be met. It was at that time, above all, that unpopular decisions had to be taken if the business were to survive.

"Sir James had been a benefactor of his native town and his ability and generosity were appreciated by all."

"LARGE ORDERS PLACED WITH MESSRS P. McBRIDE & Co"

Port Glasgow Express, Wednesday 2 June 1909

"We are pleased to be able to announce that the bulk of the work for the reconstruction of the Bay Area has been placed with local contractors. Messrs P. McBride & Co, builders and contractors, of this town have received the order for the mason and building work, the joiner work and the slater work.

"The value of this order will amount to between £50,000 and £60,000 and will give an abundance of work to local tradesmen and labourers.

"Messrs James and Henry Lithgow are entitled to have the thanks of the community for having placed this work locally, because it is no secret that the local contractors received a very substantial preference in order that the work be kept in the town.

"In this way the reconstruction of the Bay Area will prove an added blessing to Port Glasgow. It may be added that there is a likelihood of Messrs P. McBride & Company re-opening Corrie Quarry in Arran for stone to erect the new buildings in the area"

The replica of Henry Bell's paddle steamer the Comet was commissioned by Lithgows Ltd to mark the 150th anniversary of its first voyage.



a remarkably well designed advert for Scott's, with whom Lithgow's were later to amalgamate

General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate
GCB, GCVO, GBE, KCMG, DSO, DCL (Oxon), LLD (Edin)

Francis Reginald Wingate was born on the 25th of June 1861 at Broadfield, the mansion which used to stand above the Holy Family church, although at the time of his birth the house was actually in Kilmacolm Parish.

He was the seventh son of Andrew Wingate, a Glasgow textile merchant, and Elizabeth Turner, an Irish lady. His father had taken a lease of the house in 1848. A year after the boy's birth, his father died and in 1864 the family moved to Jersey.

Wingate became a soldier and an administrator. His accomplishments in both fields were many and varied.

He served in India and Aden with the Royal Artillery until 1883 when he moved to North Africa, joining the Egyptian army and serving in the relief expedition for General Gordon as Aide-de-camp to the officer commanding the expedition, General Sir Evelyn Wood.

Faced with a revolt by followers of the Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad, the UK decided to withdraw from the Sudan and Gordon was sent to arrange the passage of British civilians out of Khartoum. When that was accomplished, Gordon defied orders to withdraw and the city was besieged by the Mahdist army.



Francis Reginald Wingate

The relief came too late to save General Gordon and his garrison of 6,000 - all were slaughtered in January 1885.

Wingate mastered the language and culture of the Sudan and during his service there he gained honour after honour and steady promotion.

From 1896 to 1898 he served as director of military intelligence in the campaign to retake the Sudan under Lord Kitchener. This campaign was dramatised in the film *The Four Feathers*.

In 1899 he succeeded Lord Kitchener as Governor General of the Sudan, a post he held until 1917, when he was appointed High Commissioner to Egypt.

He disagreed with government attitudes towards the rising Egyptian nationalism, feeling that a more conciliatory approach would get better results, and in 1919 he was abruptly replaced by Field Marshall Edmund Allenby. He was not offered another post.

In the 1920 King's Birthday Honours he became Baronet Wingate of Dunbar, and of Port Sudan. He left the army in 1922. During his career he married Catherine Rundle in 1888 and they had two sons and a daughter; the daughter was god-daughter to Queen Victoria.

Wingate died in 1953.

The iron bridge and the Port Glasgow wet dock disaster

by Hugh McIntyre

People of a certain age will remember the "Iron Bridge" that used to allow progress across the entrance to the East Harbour before it was all filled in to allow the A8 to be realigned. A branch line came off the railway east of Lamont's shipyard and crossed Castle Street in front of Ferguson's yard gate via a level crossing with white gates. The line continued into the East Harbour and the Iron Bridge took it across to serve that section of the harbour area. The bridge could be swung open to allow vessels in.



Before the 1970s, when it was filled in, the East Harbour was a tidal harbour, but for a brief period it was a wet dock with a gate, the first such dock in Scotland. The James Watt Dock in Greenock is a wet dock - the dock water level is independent of the water level outside.

In 1799 the Magistrates and Council of Newark petitioned Glasgow with a proposition to convert the Bay of Newark, from the East Harbour to the Blackhouse Neuk, into a wet dock. Among the advantages they mentioned was that it would "greatly increase the trade of the port." The great attraction of a wet dock to shipowners is that, barring accidents, their vessels will not sit on the bottom and can move around at all times. It was some years before the idea was taken up.

An Act of Parliament was passed in 1830 allowing Glasgow, who still ran the town and were the Trustees of the harbours, to make a wet dock. Matters moved slowly, and in 1833, before the work had started, Port Glasgow became self-governing, free of Glasgow oversight.

The Paisley Advertiser, Saturday 26th July 1834

"On Tuesday, Messrs Gibb & Son, contractors for finishing the Port Glasgow Wet Dock, commenced operations, and on Friday two hundred Norlanders and fifty Patlanders will be at work at this enterprising undertaking which will most unquestionably tend to the improvement and advantage of Port-Glasgow."

In 1836 a commentator reckoned that the work was going along fine, with every prospect of being finished by the end of the year. However, in 1837 the work was "still going along fine," and the first rumours of problems started to circulate.

"We are extremely sorry to learn that our good neighbours of Port Glasgow have suffered a very serious loss from the north-east sea wall of their lately erected Wet Dock giving way. The accident occurred yesterday morning about 7 o'clock, being about low water.

Upwards of 100 lineal yards sunk in, some parts about 13 feet. The gate, having been very wisely thrown open, saved the inner wall, which otherwise would, in all probability have come down. It is fortunate that no persons were standing on the quay at the time, otherwise they would most likely have been buried in the rubbish."

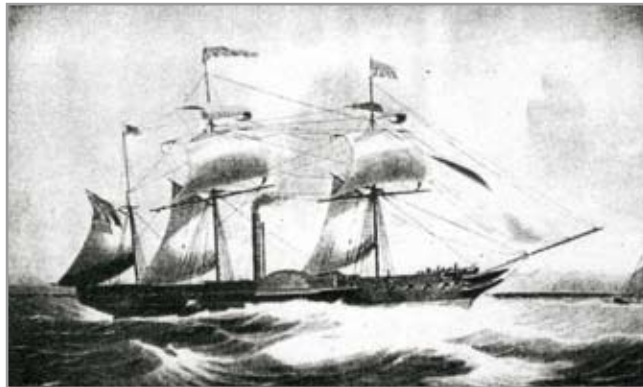
This would have been the section east of the dock entrance.

The Provost, Archibald Falconer, was quick to deny anything was wrong. This he did by the odd device of first saying nothing had collapsed, then that it had. "I am happy to say no part of the walls of the Wet Dock has given way, on the contrary, the whole of the mason-work is uninjured."

He went on to say, "It was early discovered, by a small portion of the outer wall giving way, when not more than 3 or 4 feet above low water mark, that the foundation was bad, literally a bed of soft mud, and the building of that wall was immediately abandoned and a rough stone sloped bulwark was substituted instead of the wall.

The wisdom of this contrivance is now proved by the very event which has taken place. Last year the upper end of this embankment, nearest the old Harbour, literally sunk down, displacing the mud beneath, and simply occupying its place. The same occurrence has now happened to the remaining part of it."

This ended the correspondence, but not the problems.



The British Queen, a very large paddle steamer, was built on the Thames by Curling and Young in 1838, and in May of that year she was floated out of her building dock. She was to be engined and fitted out by Robert Napier on the Clyde and in July, amid uproar about the work leaving London, she was towed to Port Glasgow. She arrived in the Clyde on the 6th of the month and tied up at the wharf on the outside quay of the Wet Dock.

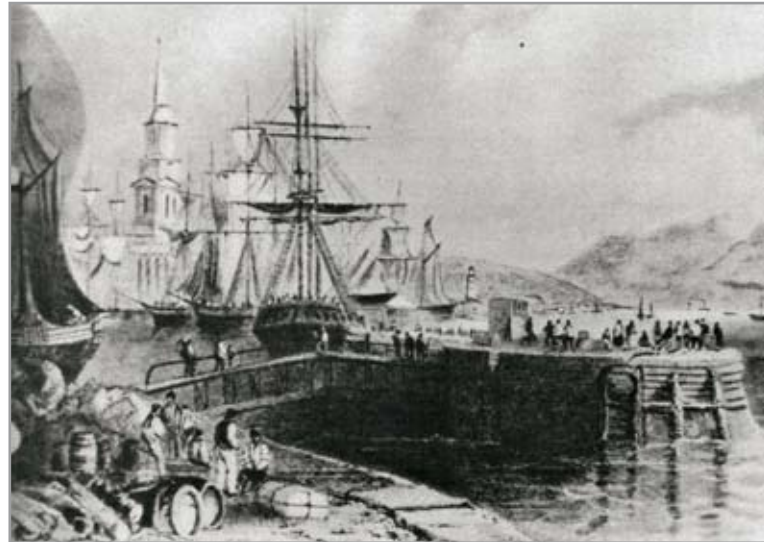
By early November, 1838, most of the machinery had been installed and the cabins were almost finished. The funnel from Robert Napier's dock at the Broomielaw was floated down and lifted aboard, and in due course the vessel left.

John Kerr, in his series of articles in the Port Glasgow Express, wrote that the quay collapsed and fell in after the British Queen left. Her maiden voyage to New York was in July 1839, and it could well have been the funnel being lifted aboard that triggered the final events.

On the 18th of June 1838, a month before the vessel arrived at the quayside, the Greenock Advertiser had carried a report of a meeting of the Port Glasgow Harbour Trust regarding the need to erect a wharf outside of a wall that had given way. Given the tendency for the walls of the dock to give way, it is likely there had been more problems, and that the wharf was for the British Queen to tie up at, rather than have her at the collapsed quayside.

When the vessel did arrive, crowds came from far and near to see her, so the trade of the town had a great boost. She was 245 ft long, a very large ship by the standards of that time, and it will have been a matter of civic pride that she should be accommodated.

What actually happened is not clear, but one thing is certain, the quay gave way adjacent to the dock gates. The gates jammed - whether open or shut makes no difference, for without them the Wet Dock was no more.



The gates were removed and the dock became tidal and silted up. Logs were stored in it and lawsuits arose over damage to vessels. The great venture of creating it came to nothing. No expectations were realised, the great increase of trade did not materialise, and a crippling debt was assumed.

The town was bankrupt.

In his history of Port Glasgow, W.F. MacArthur wrote, " the collapse of the quay wall and the failure of the attempt to convert the harbour into a wet dock caused great depression. The municipality was unable to pay its debts and had to sell the warehouses and other properties.

Most of the harbour loans, which had been a favourite local investment, were lost. In the report of the Municipal Corporation Commissioners, the Corporation's expenditure is described as being "reckless and improvident," and that "it could only be accounted for by the supposition that they had looked forward to an increase in the trade and prosperity of the town which

might have justified the expenditure, but in which they have been disappointed.” Funds had been borrowed for the Wet Dock project - MacArthur quotes £35,000, which might be high, but it is likely to have been more than £25,000, a vast sum in those days.

How vast may be estimated by comparison with the town's revenue.



In 1834 this amounted to £1,951 7s 7d, of which around half had to be set against the interest on £6,000 the town had borrowed in 1815, probably in connection with the erection of the Town's Buildings. In 1865, when the town was being extended from the Glen Burn to Boundary Street, it was still deeply in debt.

The £6,000 was still outstanding, only interest having been paid on it, and the total debt was £25,820.

This had to be cleared by July 1866 or else it would be subject to 5% interest. To raise funds, the drydock and adjacent land was sold off, as well as some warehouses.

The creditors agreed to accept 7s 0d in the pound for the outstanding Wet Dock debt of £19,820 and to waive the interest on the £6,000 debt. The town had to observe strict financial economy for the rest of the century or it may never have recovered completely.

For years later, maps of the town showed the East Harbour as the Port Glasgow Wet Dock, no doubt through ignorance as to what a wet dock is. If the East Harbour ever functioned as one, it was for a very brief period indeed.

There is an illustration, probably contemporary, showing it as the Wet Dock, but that may have been wishful thinking.



Shipbuilding

“Port Glasgow was world renowned for its shipbuilding and the many achievements it has produced.”

Port Glasgow Express

“In the picture of The Town of Port Glasgow, 1820 there is a large building in Robert Street opposite Glasgow Road which might be mistaken for the Mill building but which is Fowlers sugarhouse, one of Port Glasgow’s former two sugarhouses. It was destroyed by fire in 1869 or 1870, after which the firm removed to London and still exists. Fowler’s syrup is well known to present day housewives.



“The part of the Gourrock Ropework Coys buildings on the east side of Robert Street, known as the cooperage, was the original cooperage belonging to the sugarhouse.

“The Bay Yard, which was the property of the Port Glasgow Harbour Trust, has had many tenants. Alexander and James Martin, Peter Murchie, Thomas Wishart, Kirkpatrick & McIntyre William & John Hamilton, and Mc Fadyen & Co.

“But most interesting to all engaged in shipbuilding, it was the yard which, in 1874, Russell & Co. first commenced business, the partners being Messrs Joseph Russell, W. J Lithgow and Anderson Rodger.

“In 1879 a lease was taken of the shipyard in the east end of Greenock, which is now occupied by the Greenock Dockyard Coy, and Kingston Yard was purchased in 1883. In 1892 the partnership was dissolved, Mr Russell retiring.

“Mr Lithgow took over Kingston and the Greenock Yard and Mr Anderson Rodger the Dry Dock and Bay Yard, where in 1904 the last sailing ship built in Port Glasgow was launched. She was the Wellgunde, for Hamburg owners.”

For the shipyards to expand it needed a workforce, which attracted many immigrants to the shores of Port Glasgow looking for work. Shipbuilding was in its infancy, just emerging from the wooden ship era.



There was John Wood's Yard across from Princes Street, a succession of yards on the east side of Glen Burn, and a yard near Newark Castle that launched into the East Harbour. The town had all the trades associated with the shipping industry using the harbours, and it had plenty of pubs.



Indeed, in the 1836 Statistical Account comment had been made that the number of pubs had been reduced to seventy.

A shipbuilding family

by Hugh McIntyre



George William McIntyre

Each of us can look back on our previous generations who came to this town and settled; my family came from Ireland in the late 1850s. John McIntyre, and Jane Cameron his wife, came direct to Port Glasgow, as far as is known, to a slum on King Street. Thomson's Land was so low in value that it was not assessed for taxes - I don't even know where it was. If they brought with them a fund of stories about life in Ireland, almost none of it passed down to me.

There was a tale that John had been a coachman to the Duke of Hamilton, and that they had come, from what I heard, as Newtonstewart.

This translated to Newtown Stewart in County Tyrone, and the Duke must have been the Duke of Abercorn, James Hamilton, a relation of the other one. Whatever he had been in Ireland, John got a job as a shipyard labourer, the first of my family to work in a shipyard here.

John's son, George, was my great grandfather. George William Martin Cameron McIntyre, to give him his full name, seems to have been the only child who came here with the parents. His siblings, James and Mary Jane, did not arrive until a little later, perhaps having stayed behind with their married sister, Martha, who didn't leave Ireland.

In 1866 Mary Jane married John Armour, a sea cook, the son of a butcher on Princes Street. Not long after, they disappeared from the local record, perhaps having emigrated. Unless some hints are passed down in the family, such disappearances can be hard to explain.

James died of tuberculosis in 1871, 14 months after marrying Mary Jane MacNutt, who was the daughter of a coal merchant on Ashgrove Lane, and his father followed him to the grave within a year. When he died, James was an ironfitter (a plater) in a local shipyard.

His widowed mother Jane, at first lived with George in Chapel Lane, where one of their neighbours was William T. Lithgow, a young shipyard draughtsman who later founded the Lithgow shipbuilding firm. Jane ended her days in 1892 as a paying inmate in Smithston Poorhouse.



She was buried in a common grave in Greenock Cemetery. This has always puzzled me, as her family weren't paupers.

Mary Jane left no children in the town, and James didn't have any, so it was left to George to preserve the line.

George became a riveter, a trade that most of the men in the family were to follow. He married Hannah Stewart in 1871, and went on to be head foreman riveter in Scotts East Yard. He fell into the Mid Harbour in Port Glasgow just after New Year, 1916, and drowned. No doubt he'd had a drink too many - I don't think he was teetotal. Hannah had died in 1898, and in the years that followed George married Christina Stewart, no relation to Hannah. He and Hannah had 11 children in all, of whom 5 did not survive infancy, and by Christina he had another 6. When he married her, Christina was a widow with a family to a Mr MacDonald. Combined, it was a big family.

Hannah Stewart, my great grandmother, was born in Glasgow, the daughter of John Stewart and Janet Vallance. John spent the later part of his life at sea as an engineer, probably with the Pacific Steam Navigation Company sailing to South America. They arrived in the town around 1864, after a brief stay in Paisley. One of the many family tales handed down involved a riot in Paisley, John being a "special constable", and someone being killed - supposedly the reason they came to Port Glasgow. Janet was born in Paisley to a family connected with the timber trade, originally from Old Cumnock in Ayrshire.

She and John married in Glasgow in 1850. They lived initially at 5 Clune Brae, avoiding the slums in the town centre - apparently they were "well-doing" people. Hannah was a steam loom weaver, most likely in Birkmyre's Mill, when she and George met.



Elizabeth Henderson and family

Hannah's brother, Malcolm, fell off a staging in Duncan's shipyard in 1887; he was a riveter and unmarried. His body was taken straight home, which must have been traumatic for his family. Were people used to such things in those days? Who can say?

Her other siblings, Alexander and James, iron moulders both, emigrated to Canada in the late 1880s with their sister, Elizabeth. Hugh was apprenticed to a saddler in Port Glasgow, but ended up as a marine engineer in Chile, latterly marrying a Chilean lady. Their Chilean descendants are in and around the Santiago area to this present day, all doing very well.

Mary never married. For a time she worked as housekeeper to Hugh after his wife died and she accompanied his children on sea voyages to and from Chile. Helen was the youngest of the family and she married James McDonald, a carpenter from Morayshire, in 1889. They stayed on in Port Glasgow.

John Stewart died suddenly in 1890; his wife took to her bed and died 12 days later. "She turned her face to the wall," was how it was told to me, she died, literally, of a broken heart.

Hugh, my grandfather, became an assistant foreman riveter alongside his father, George, in Scotts East Yard where he and his brothers, George and John, were in the same riveting squad.



George McIntyre, centre front
Hugh McIntyre, front, 5th from left

I was told they did bottom riveting and used to sneak into the yard on a Sunday to get the job set up for the Monday - riveters were on piece work. Hugh died in 1934 after taking ill while watching a football match at the Garvel Park; it may have been a burst appendix.

John and George lived on till the late 50s, John moved to Johnstone, and George stayed on in Port Glasgow.

My father, Bill, started off as a joiner, before opting to join the Argylls. Not long after, he was sentenced to five years for mutiny while serving in Jamaica. All I ever learned of this was that either he had been part of a group who refused to help an MP arrest a drunken soldier, or he had been part of a group singing The Red Flag.

Knowing Dad, either is possible.

He and his three companions only served two years of the five and he came home to meet my mother and marry. Dad worked for the rest of his life as a read leader in shipyards both here and abroad in Norway and Poland. His mutinous conduct in the Argylls didn't hold back his Army career in WW2, where he received a field promotion to the rank of sergeant while fighting the Vichy French in Madagascar.

All I'll say of myself is that I was the 5th generation of my family to work in local shipyards.

The visit of King George V

by Hugh McIntyre

In 1917, King George V embarked on a tour of the merchant shipyards, marine engine builders and steel mills in the UK. Four days were spent in the west of Scotland.

At 10.00am on the 17th of September, he and his entourage arrived in Greenock Central Station. By 1.00pm they had finished with Greenock and drove to Upper Greenock Railway Station where, no doubt, they had lunch aboard the Royal train.

At 2.10pm the Royal pilot engine passed through Port Glasgow Passenger Station (as it was referred to in the newspaper report) - no other engine was permitted to be between the pilot engine and the Royal train, which arrived at 2.27, pulled by two engines.

Peter MacFarlane, Provost, and Andrew Paton, Town Clerk, were presented to the King, and "on emerging from the station," said the Port Express, "a joyful sight presented itself to the King - the Star Hotel was brightly adorned with flags and bunting, and presented a noble appearance."



King George V during his visit to Port Glasgow

The procession went down John Wood Street and along Bay Street to Blackstone. When he called at Glasgow City Chambers on the following day, the crowds were kept away "at a respectful" distance - a photo shows this to have been a long distance indeed. There seems to have been no such restriction in Port Glasgow, as can be seen in the image above, and the narrow streets were lined with school children waving flags.

The tour started at the Clyde Shipbuilding and Engineering Co, followed by a short walk round to Ferguson's. On leaving Ferguson's they drove back along the town to Murdoch & Murray's yard opposite Jean Street, then further along to Russell & Co at the Kingston Yard. The tour ended at the yard of Dunlop & Bremner immediately west of Kingston. The scheduled completion time was 4.35pm.

At each yard the King spent 20 minutes. This covered presentations, conversations and looking at examples of the work carried out, from smithys and joiner shops, to completed vessels. A fair degree of planning must have been carried out beforehand.

After presentations and introductions in the Town's Buildings, the Royal train left for Glasgow at 5.00pm. What the King recalled of it all is hard to say.

As might be expected, the various owners and senior directors were presented to the King, but so were other and less exalted people in the yards.

At the Clyde yard

- George Wilson, 55 years service and lost a son (David) on HMS Vanguard
- William Brown, 42 years
- John Wallace, 30 years
- Charles McLees, engineers' shop steward

At Murdoch & Murray

- William Elliot, junior, plater
- Thomas Herd, joiner, 30 years service
- David Allan, shipwright
- Daniel McLaughlan, smithy, ex-South Africa
- Thomas Mulgrew, representing riveters, caulkers and hole-borers, third generation with the company

At Russell & Co

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| ■ William Oliver | ■ John McNeur |
| ■ Edward McLaughlan | ■ Owen Hurrell |
| ■ William Steel | ■ Donald Gillan |

The men were chosen by their workmates.



At Dunlop & Bremner

- Mrs Bennett, supervisor of the 80 to 90 women workers
- William McQuat, aged 77, engineers and smiths
- William Chaloner, carpenters and drillers
- James Hunter, joiners and painters
- Angus McMillan, ironworkers
- John McGarry, labourers.

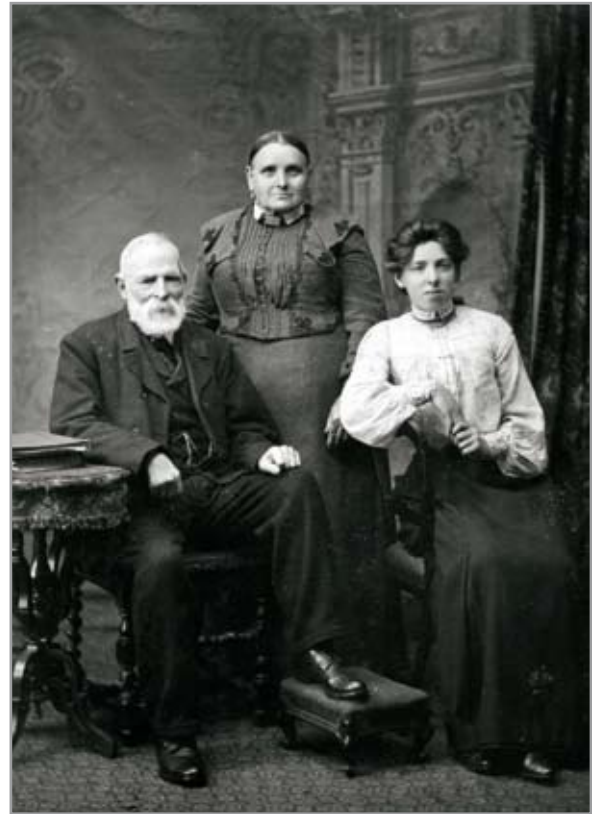
There were 34 vessels building in the five yards at this time, a statistic that should give us food for thought given the recent droughts and uncertain future of shipbuilding on the lower Clyde.

World War I

by Ruby Anderson

Port Glasgow has a War Memorial to all the men who fell in the First World War. So who were these men?

Ruby reflects on her family's memories of brave family members who fought for King and Country.



Thomas and Mary Marshall
with daughter Elizabeth (age 18), 1901

Thomas Marshall (Flax Mill Foreman) married his third wife Mary MacAulay on the 1st of January 1866. Mary was eighteen years of age when she married Thomas – she became mother to his three children by a previous marriage. Although thirteen children were born to Thomas and Mary, not all survived into adulthood.

In the family album are photographs of young men in their uniforms. I have been only able to identify three sons - Daniel, James and John. James died of TB in 1912, aged 28 – I have been unable to identify the uniform he is wearing in the photograph.

Thomas Marshall (father) died on the 16th of February 1911, at his home in Balfour Street, Port Glasgow. A funeral card reads "Brother Thomas Marshall, who was faithful Tyler of Lodge Doric Kilwinning No.68 for 35 years."

His wife Mary died at the home of her daughter in 1927.

Both Daniel and John served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in WW1.



Daniel Marshall, 1869-1942,
son of Thomas and Mary Marshall

Daniel is wearing the uniform of a soldier in the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll's around 1904-1906. Private Marshall served in 'D' company before WWI – this photograph was taken in India. He received good conduct pay of one penny a day in 1903 and completed 8 years with the colours in 1904.

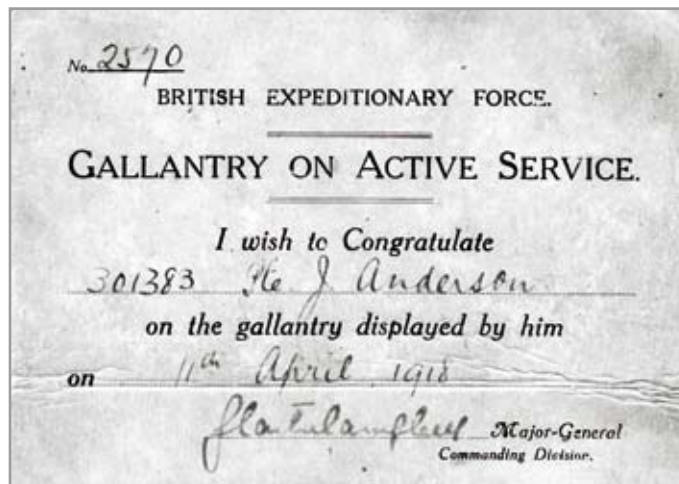
He was awarded a nursing certificate in 1905 and received service pay class 1 of 7 pence in 1905. He went to France on the 21st of August 1914, as part of the reinforcement draft of men to replace casualties within the 2nd Battalion and was returned to the UK on medical grounds on the 17th of November 1914.



John Marshall, 1892-1920,
youngest son of Thomas and Mary Marshall

John like his brother Daniel also served in the Argyll's in WW1. The inscription on the back of this photograph reads 'To Mother from John – Mustapha 23/2/17.

On return to the UK John served on duty guarding the mines, although after returning home from service he was diagnosed with TB from which he died age 28.



James Anderson

James Anderson, son of William Anderson and his wife Jane (nee Howie), was born in Port Glasgow on 25th July 1896. Enlisting on the 12th December 1915, he served in WWI with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and saw duty at the Battle of the Somme. He was awarded the Gallantry Medal for his brave service in the field on 11th April 1918.

Information to hand states that he carried a wounded soldier from the field of battle while under enemy fire. He also received the British War Medal and an Allied Victory Medal; both of these are campaign medals.

Near the end of the Great War he was captured and became a Prisoner of War in Germany. The story goes that one morning when the prisoners awoke, no guards came to release them from their huts and all was silent outside. On peeping through a hole in the door, no-one could be seen; the Germans had disappeared. "Does this mean war is over?" – there was no-one to ask.

Eventually a truck with Allied Troops entered the camp – it is difficult to conceive what that must have felt like, I think you would have to have been there to know.

In 1922 he married Catherine Mitchell, they have two daughters who live in Greenock and Gourock respectively – Elizabeth McClarnon and Irene Pollard from whom I obtained the above information.

Murrayfield playing fields

“WHAT THE SCHEME MEANS TO PORT GLASGOW”

“Through the initiative of Father Towie, the parish priest, members of St John’s congregation and the public of Port Glasgow will soon have one of the finest playing centres in the West of Scotland.

“Wonderful improvements have been made from east to west of the old town within recent years, but in certain ways our advance to modernity has lagged behind what other towns are doing and if we have provided the citizens with better houses and greatly improved surroundings up to the present there has been a decided lack of initiative in providing sufficient recreation grounds. But we are out to remedy our deficiencies in this respect and following shortly after the announcement of the Town Council’s purchase of the lower lands of Carnegie came the welcome news that the old shipyard of Messrs Murdoch & Murray had been purchased for conversion into the playing fields.

“The reverend gentleman has not been many years amongst us, but during his short ministry in our town he has grasped the needs of the community and launched forth this big hearted scheme which is going to prove of incalculable benefit to the people of Port Glasgow.

“Considering that possession was only obtained at the end of May, the amount of spadework that has been done in the interval by the large and enthusiastic band of voluntary workers is really astonishing. Among these workers are some of the finest tradesmen in Port Glasgow and their labour of love is going to prove a fitting testimony to their thoroughness and skill.



a team of workers stop for a moment during the construction of the fields

“When it is remembered what the ground was like a few weeks ago, one is amazed at the progress made in the short time. The roughly strewn foreshore has been cleared of boulders, and hundreds of tonnes of sand have changed the aspect to a finely levelled beach, which might easily be the envy of many of our coast resorts. Here the children may be found revelling in all the pleasures of sand-building and paddling, and in the course of time the older folks will have every opportunity for watching the kiddies play.

“Many difficult problems confronted the workers during the progress of ground levelling but these have been overcome with most satisfactory results. There is ample ground for several branches of sport, and on the eastern side four well constructed tennis courts have been

marked out, two of which will be for club members and two for public use. Quoiting pitches will also be provided and an open-air draughts board will also offer facilities for those whose recreation is pursued on less strenuous lines.

"One of the first of the clubs to get under way was the Rowing Club, whose membership has gone up in leaps and bounds until it is well over the two hundred mark. A fine clubhouse has been provided with every facility for comfort and training purposes.

"There are already several racing craft and a small fleet of pleasure boats, which will be augmented as time goes by. A fine slipway is in use and it is proposed to construct another.

"The offices and workshops of the shipbuilding yard have been partially rebuilt and remodelled to suit their new purpose, with a kitchen attached and there is also ample accommodation as meeting places for the various sporting branches.

"Band performances will also be a feature and already St. John's Prize Band have given much appreciated programmes on their new ground, and those who were present on Sunday evening will want to do it again.

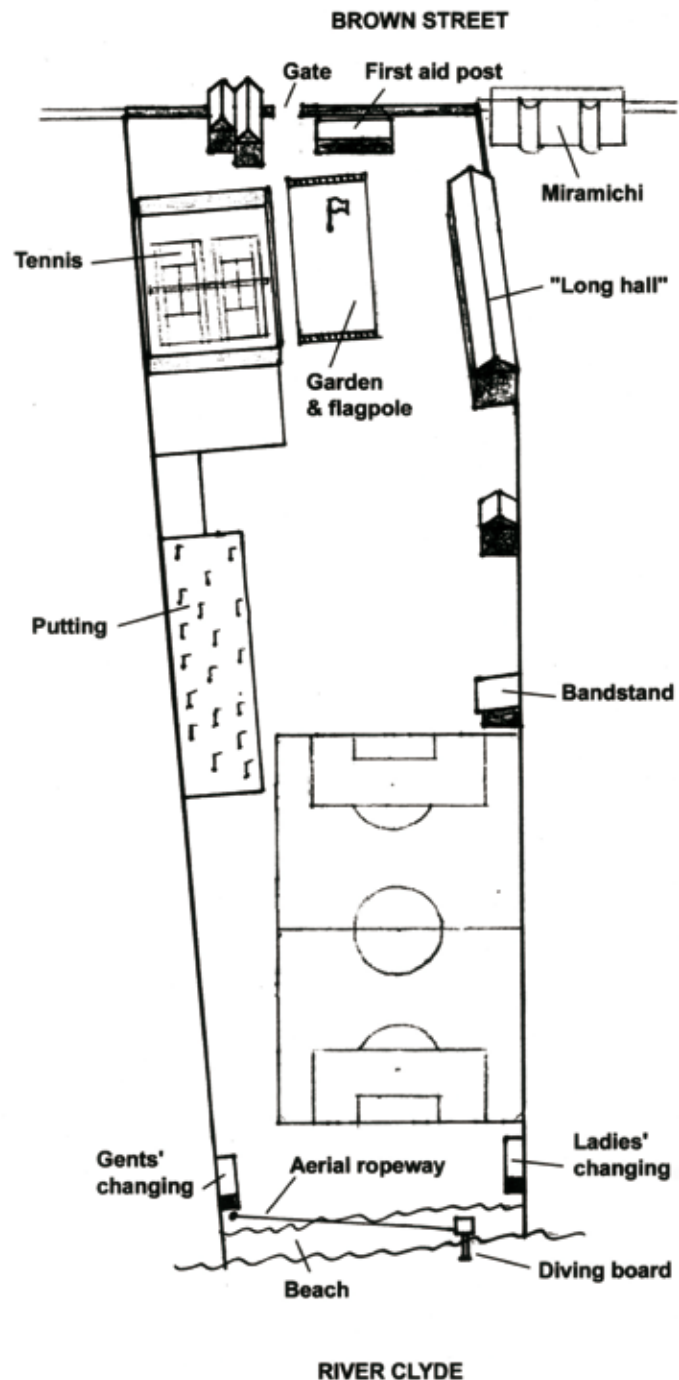
"An up-to-date bandstand on the most approved principle will be erected, surrounded by hundreds of seats for music lovers.

"The drainage of the ground, a very important matter connected with playing fields, has been well attended to.

"Throughout the area a copious supply of water has been provided and electric lamps will be in use for lighting purposes.

"There is almost no limit to the possibilities of the place and as the scheme is brought to completion, Murrayfield is certain to have a big influence in the social life of Port Glasgow.

"It says much for the generosity of those responsible for this splendid enterprise that members of every denomination will be granted the privilege of using the ground."



**"ATTRACTIONS AT MURRAYFIELD
Large Crowds at Sunday Band Performance"**

Port Glasgow Express, Wednesday July 29th 1931

"Murrayfield looks as if it were going to supply a want felt in the district. At the performance in the grounds by St. John's Silver Prize Band large numbers were present, there being many visitors from Greenock and elsewhere.

"The music was much enjoyed and there was a big demand for the deck chairs. There will be another fine programme by the band on Sunday evening should the weather be favourable.



"The new bandstand at the ground is quickly reaching towards completion and in little more than a week should be ready. The men employed on the grounds have done remarkably well and are due a special word of praise for their wholehearted efforts.

"Before long the tennis courts will have been formed and devotees of this recreation will have ample opportunity to perfect their game irrespective of sect or creed.

"The rowing club attached to Murrayfield have been putting in some hard training since they took over the premises and got their boats, and before the end of the season a regatta, at which the other local clubs will be invited to take part, will be held.

"It may also be possible to stage a swimming race at this regatta and altogether there seems good prospect of some good amusement for the general public before the end of the summer season."

Coronation Park

Coronation Park offers recreational space for the people of Port Glasgow, although it has went through many changes since its conception and many would argue that it is cut off from the town due to the A8. However I have found archived material which discusses the plans of Coronation Park.

“BEAUTIFYING THE TOWN Old West Harbour Scheme Approved”

Port Glasgow Express, Wednesday May 13, 1936

“The late ex-bailie McLaughlin many years ago suggested a scheme for the improvement of the appearance of the Fore Street by the planting of shrubs and flower gardens, but the scheme at the time was thought too Utopian, but the Town Council have now gone a stage further than the scheme proposed by the late ex-bailie and the vicinity of the Fore Street will soon be a thing of beauty, and a joy forever as the late ex bailie would have remarked.

“The Old West Harbour was taken over by the Town Council from the Harbour Trust some years ago with the intention of providing an open space. The harbour has now completely filled in and the scheme now to be proceeded with provides for a delightful open space in the very heart of the town. Some time ago the scheme, as suggested by the Council, was submitted to the Commissioner for Special Areas and this body has also approved of the scheme and offered a grant of fifty percent of the cost. The estimated cost of the scheme is £7,500.



the Coronation Park corporation plaque and the old bandstand

“Fronting Fore Street will be flower beds, trees, a new weigh box, attendants office and ladies and gentlemen’s conveniences. Swings and joy wheels will be provided for children and on the east and west sides of the ground will be formed more flower beds, and additional trees will be planted.

“A bandstand will be constructed in the centre of the filled in harbour and seats will be placed at intervals. A railing will be erected on the waterside of the ground, and along the waterfront more seats will be placed where the older folks can sit and watch the passing river traffic.

“The whole ground except where there will be flower beds and trees is to be tarmacadamised, and the levels will be brought up to coincide with the present main road levels.

“A condition of the grant from the Special Areas Committee is that work is to be commenced on the scheme within two months. The Fore Street ground has again been let as the Fair ground for this year, but this will not interfere with the scheme being commenced within the specified time.”

Country Dance Classes

Another recreational past time was Country Dance Classes; Peggy McDonalds Ladies Country Dance Class was held in the gym hall of Jean Street School. Peggy was a well-known dance teacher in Port Glasgow, and as well as her adult class in Jean Street School, she taught many children in her home in Maxwell Street.



Classes in country dance, highland dance and ballet all took place in her small flat; husband Hector must have been a very calm and patient person to cope with a fiddler and many children invading his home on a regular basis. I remember the excitement when we took part in a dance display in the Old Townhall at the bottom of Princes Street.

Port Glasgow's Cinemas

The Eclipse Picture House opened on Brown Street on 20th January 1914 and closed its doors in 1938 and was demolished to make way for a new cinema that would occupy the same ground.

When World War II broke out in September 1939 all work stopped and the shell of the building was used as a canteen for shipyard employees during the War years.

The old Palace Music Hall that had closed during the early 1930's was reopened as the Palace Picture House, and the projection equipment for the Eclipse Cinema was transferred to it.



The Port Palace, as it was called, was situated at the junction of Scarlow Street and Water Street, just across from the foot of King Street.

The new building in Brown Street opened as the Plaza Cinema in January 1951, and had a short life as a cinema. It closed in February 1964 and later reopened as a Bingo Hall.

The Palace Picture House closed in 1955 there being no need for two cinemas.

"PORT GLASGOW'S WONDER CINEMA"

Greenock Telegraph

"Eyes widening, mouths opening and gasps of astonishment were the order of the day when the public entered Port Glasgow's new cinema on Saturday afternoon. And his or her surprise and wonder were genuine, as no one could believe our new cinema would be so luxuriously finished and equipped.

"Around 1800 folk attended a private performance on Saturday afternoon when they were guests of the Eclipse Picture House Ltd at the opening of the new Plaza and saw the first full performance.

"The comfort of the seats, the carpets, the decorations, the warmth of the atmosphere all evoked words of praise from the large audience that the cinema is without doubt one of the best in the country is not sales talk, but definitely fact.



the Plaza cinema in its heyday

"No doubt much of the trade, which Greenock gets at present, will go to the local cinema and it is hoped the Plaza Manager, Mr Oliver, will be able to maintain the high standard, which has already been set.



"To many of our readers the word cinema in Port Glasgow means the Palace. We can recommend them without fear to visit the Plaza, as this cinema is better than any in Greenock.

"As the Lithgow Club is now to the old model-lodging house, so is the Plaza to the Palace.

"Port Glasgow has been proud recently to put one over on Greenock in the opening of Auchenbothie House, which as we have reported is supreme in its class.

"Similarly with the Plaza we have again surpassed Greenock as the Plaza is undoubtedly supreme in its class."

The first film to be shown was 'Neptune's Daughter' and the last was 'Father Came Too.'



internal views of the Plaza

From the staging to the stage

A Mr Pollock from Port Glasgow came to visit me at John Wood Street. He informed me the Lithgow's had a drama group and that they had written and produced a very successful play. Much to our disappointment we tried to trace a copy of the script called "The Port" but to no avail, although some research into archives found this piece which reported on its success.

"SHIPYARDS WORKERS PLAY"

Port Glasgow Express, Wednesday April 6th, 1940

"If Bernard Shaw, Somerset Maugham, Emylin Williams and other eminent playwrights gathered together and decided to build a ship we would scarcely expect them to turn out an expert job. Equally, when a team of shipyard workers set their hearts on fashioning a play we don't look for a theatrical masterpiece we are prepared to make allowances.

"It would be unfair to use existing professional standards when judging the merits of 'The Port', the full length play written by the members of the Lithgow Club Dramatic Group and presented by them this week in the Town Hall. The enterprise of the group appeals to us, and we take our seats hoping to be interested and entertained, rather than with any intention of concentrating on the occasional shortcomings that are practically unavoidable in a production of this kind.

"The strong point of the play is its sincerity. It tells of the impact of the depression and the war on an ordinary Port Glasgow family. By and large we feel that what we are looking at is something that really happened. These, we say, are real people, our ain folk. This is how they talk and think and act.

"In a foreword which appears on the programme, Mr Oliver Wilkinson of Community House, who guided the group when they were writing 'The Port' tells us that, in the usual sense, it is hardly a play at all. It is true that it does not follow normal lines of the three-act play, but on the other hand it is not merely a pageant. In a way it is put together in the style of Noel Coward's 'Cavalcade' - though the plays have little in common apart from the skeleton framework.



"'The Port' gives us revealing episodes in the life of a Port Glasgow family from 1928-1945, providing at the same time a fairly adequate picture of the general life here, particularly in the years of the depression.

"That bad time is treated with understanding. We have the patient resignation of the father of the family (played by Alex Kidd) the understandable bitterness of one of his sons (Andrew Machining). Even the bosses point of view is put on record. As the show is to present again tonight, and many people have still to see it, I feel it would not be fair to say anymore about the story.

"Of the large cast, few have had any previous acting experience, but with few exceptions they come through the test remarkably well, some indeed are excellent. On the whole, the girls give a more polished performance than their opposite numbers, but all the main parts are pretty well cast and even those who are quite new to the stage contrive to appear natural.

THE REAL THING

"Alex Kidd remains unmistakably Alex Kidd – a Port Glasgow plater of the older generation, unquestionably authentic, Andrew McWhinnie and Bryce Pollock as his sons are equally good. Walter Renfrew, as the shy youngster who comes to the Port from an orphanage, does his best with a part that is anything but easy. Robert Connell contributes a lifelike study of an argumentative 'drunk'.

"There was nothing to choose between the women folk of the family. Margaret McGrath as the mother was exactly right; Chrissie Fraser was amusing and very natural as the younger daughter, Helen.

"In the star part of the older daughter Jenny Law was both attractive and competent. She had obviously studied with advantage, the manners and actions of the screen heroines.

"Without any doubt 'The Port' has been an experiment worth trying. Much work has been put into it, but it has certainly not been a case of effort wasted, and all connected with the play have every reason to feel proud of them this time.

"The lighting, by James Dunbar of Glasgow, is also very good. The Rev. George D. Wilkie produced the show and must have had a difficult task."

In addition to the players already mentioned, the following members of the club took part in the show



the Empire Theatre, Greenock

- Joe Rodger
- Tom McCairn
- Dan McGurk
- Colin Pyott
- David Simpson
- Roy Whiteford
- John McCormick
- Margaret McBain

- Robert Davidson
- Sam McAlpine
- Joe Andrews
- D. Cunningham
- Stewart Thomas
- R Stevenson
- Neil McKay
- Helen Boag

World War II

Port Glasgow had experienced the loss of their loved ones in World War I, in memory of whom they erected a monument to the fallen.

Yet World War 2 brought a new threat in the shape of the Luftwaffe, which was to bring fear and destruction to the town of Port Glasgow and local people were to lose their lives, mostly women and children.



Loss

On the 6th and 7th of May 1941 the Luftwaffe brought the War to the doorsteps of Port Glasgow.

Areas of Port Glasgow which suffered loss and damage were

- Woodhall Avenue
- Shankland Road
- Lilybank
- Pleasantside Avenue
- Bouverie Terrace

For some families the devastation of loss was just beginning.

Some families found themselves separated, while new accommodation was found. Some younger children were sent to orphanages, where they spent a number of years before being brought back together.

Memories of the Blitz in Port Glasgow

Anonymous

My first recollection of the German Planes coming up the Clyde is when I was in Hospital after giving birth to my first child; at that time you stayed in bed for two weeks. When the planes were spotted they evacuated the hospital immediately.

I remember a time after this when an incendiary bomb was dropped onto our house in Montgomerie Street. My husband ran to the roof to put it out.

When we heard the siren going off, I was very frightened and we had to run to the shelters.

Another recollection I have is that of Woodhall. This received a direct hit and a number of people were killed.

One of the men who rushed to help found the body of his own mother.

List of blitz fatalities

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Adamson, Catherine (18) | ■ Kitchen, Sarah (5) |
| ■ Allan, Annie Rennie (21) | ■ McAlindon, Elizabeth (8) |
| ■ Allan, Jeanie McLaughlin | ■ McGaughan, Hugh |
| ■ Allan, John (13) | ■ McCulloch, Isabella (11) |
| ■ Allan, Mrs Margaret | ■ McCulloch, Mrs Mary |
| ■ Allan, Mary Reifly (16) | ■ McCulloch Thomas (4) |
| ■ Allan, William Barr | ■ McDade, Francis (4) |
| ■ Arthur, James Murray (6) | ■ McDade, Francis |
| ■ Burnside, Janet Watson | ■ McGlinchey, John Stewart |
| ■ Butler, Mrs Wilhelmina | ■ McGonigle, Mrs Sarah |
| ■ Butlet, Wuhelmina (8 mths) | ■ McGovern, Edward (9 mths) |
| ■ Clabby, James (Home Guard) | ■ McGovern, Mrs Violet |
| ■ Clabby, Peter | ■ McIntosh, Mrs Ahirie |
| ■ Docherty, John (4) | ■ McIntosh, Robert (12) |
| ■ Duffy, Annie | ■ McKay, James |
| ■ Duffy Mrs Margaret | ■ McLernan, Mrs Margaret |
| ■ Duffy Margaret (11) | ■ McNeill, Mrs Norah |



- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ Flaherty, William | ■ McNeil, Sarah (15) |
| ■ Finlay, David | ■ Montgomery, Honora Murray |
| ■ Fox, Mrs Catherine | ■ Ptolomey, Annie Hood |
| ■ Fullerton, Elizabeth | ■ Ptolomey, Edward Curran |
| ■ Fullerton, Terence (5) | ■ Ptolomey Margaret Newton |
| ■ Gemmell Agnes Mary (3) | ■ Ptolomey, Mary Curran |
| ■ Gemmell, Edward (2) | ■ Purdue, Mrs Margaret |
| ■ Gemmell, Mrs Mary | ■ Ramsay, Mrs Minnie |
| ■ Haig, Mrs Catherine | ■ Ramsay, Helen |
| ■ Hanley, Mrs Agnes | ■ Robertson, Mrs Agnes |
| ■ Harrington, Edward Murphy | ■ Stevenson, Mrs Margaret |
| ■ Harrington James (11) | ■ Stevenson, Michael (4 mths) |
| ■ Higgins, Mary | ■ Stewart, James |
| ■ Higgins Sarah | ■ Ward, Bernard |
| ■ Keyes, James | ■ White, Catherine Ferguson |
| ■ Kitchen, Annie (10) | ■ White, Mrs Janet |
| ■ Kitchen, Hugh | ■ Wilkinson, Mrs Caroline |
| ■ Kitchen, John (9) | ■ Wilson, William |

“WOODHALL SHELTER WAS DEATH TRAP FOR 40”

Greenock Telegraph, 6th May 1941

“At the outbreak of war, 39 public street shelters were erected throughout the burgh of Port Glasgow. Built of brick with concrete floor and roof, these were not designed to withstand a direct hit from high explosive bombs, but did offer protection from flying debris, fragmentation and incendiary bombs.



a shelter of the similar brick and concrete construction as those used in the area

“Starting at midnight on 5th of May 1941, the Air Raid Precautions services were fully extended, dealing with incidents including many fires throughout the town.

“At 03.10 hours an ARP messenger (telephones were out) from the Wardens Post No1 reported at the Control Centre, Coronation Park that a high explosive bomb had exploded between the street shelter and houses at 15, 16 and 17 Woodhall Terrace, causing many casualties and that people were trapped.

“Rescue and First Aid services were promptly despatched to the scene. It was a tragic sight.”

About 100 souls, mainly women and children, had sought sanctuary in the shelter, which proved a veritable death trap. The bomb did not actually score a direct hit on the shelter but the resultant blast and earth shock caused the walls to collapse and the heavy roof to crush the people within. Forty lives were lost, 20 women, 19 children and one man.

Many of the remainder were injured, the more seriously being removed to hospital and others treated at Boglestone and Murrayfield First Aid Posts.

The dead were conveyed to a temporary mortuary at the garage premises of James Wright in Scarlow Street. The Reverend H.C. Whitley, minister of Newark Parish and later of St Giles, refers to his book “Laughter in Heaven” and relates to how he and his friend, the Reverend Father Simon Keane of the Catholic Church, strived to comfort and succour the dying.

Another bomb dropped on a block at 20 Pleasantside Avenue and killed two men, five women and six children, while another high explosive fell on 2 Pleasantside Avenue, failing to explode. By one of these freaks of fate, in its descent it actually hit and killed a mother and injured her child who also subsequently died. Truth at times can be stranger than fiction.

In the early hours of the following morning the air raid continued and Bouverie Street suffered when 13 people were killed and 40 injured. A number of unexploded bombs had to be dealt with and many people temporary evacuated. In the course of the two nights of bombing the number of dead totalled 73.

Looking back, those were strange times. A wonderful spirit prevailed the blackout, food rationing and everything a formidable enemy could do.

The spirits of ordinary people remained high and there was no lack of volunteers for each of the ARP (later Civil Defence) services. Port Glasgow could be justly proud of its citizens at that period of history and by hard work, sheer courage and tenacity proved their ability to rise to the occasion when such a situation arose.

To strike a personal note, it was my fate as a member of the then Renfrewshire Constabulary to be seconded to Civil Defence in January 1939 and served in that capacity in Port Glasgow throughout the War.

Later I became Inspector of Police in Port Glasgow and retired and immigrated to New Zealand in 1951.

To those who still remember those stirring tragic times, I would like to send my warmest greetings and to record that the recollection of those many loyal and devoted citizens of Port Glasgow, down through the years has remained one of my most treasured memories."

by Robert Watt
a former police inspector in Port Glasgow
now living in Christchurch, New Zealand.

This story was told to me by my wife

Anonymous

In 1939 a family were living in the small house between the Westend Bar and the Glen Burn. The house was condemned and they moved to a new house at 15 Woodhall Terrace in July 1939.

On May 6th 1941, the night of the Blitz they were evacuated to the Air Raid shelter at Woodhall. The shelter was bombed. The father, an ARP Warden, was killed in the street, three of the children were killed in the shelter, one of the children was sitting on my wife's knee, and her mother was six months pregnant at the time.

The mother and her three surviving children were left with only what they stood in. Their grandparents took them in until the town could find them alternative accommodation, which turned out to be a basement flat below pavement level.

When I first met my wife in 1946 they had moved to the Pawn Shop Close in Scarlow Street. The close had a turret staircase and they were placed at the very top. The house was lit by gas light and shortly after moving in, they had an accident when the gas lighting went out resulting in the family being taken to hospital with gas poisoning.

In 1947, Woodhall Terrace was rebuilt and the family returned to the same building. Naturally the family have moved on throughout their lives and sadly the mother is no longer here, but she is survived by her four children including the child born after the Blitz.



Veda Bread advertisement, inspiring mothers to send the long lasting loaves to their sons at war

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

Although just prior to the outbreak of war air raid precautions preparations were somewhat slow to be begun in Port Glasgow, not much time was lost afterwards.

"A big army of air raid wardens had been instructed in the duties, which might be expected of them in the event of air raids, but through one cause and another, the ranks of the wardens gradually diminished. Other voluntary workers however came along and at present there is a very gratifying number."

THE MILL SHELTER

Messrs Birkmyre, owners of the Gourock Ropework, undertook a building plan, which would offer safety for 1000 employees who worked at the Mill



internal views of the (now flooded) Ropeworks air raid shelter

Greenock Telegraph

"The events of the past few days have once again brought into prominence the provision made for the safety of the public generally and employees in particular. So far as the latter are concerned, by kind permission of the directors of the Gourock Ropework Co Ltd, Port Glasgow ARP personnel, comprising air raid wardens, members of the report centre, and the special police visited the work's ARP Shelter.

"On behalf of the company, Mr A. Sinclair Roxburgh, works superintendent, welcomed 68 of the personnel and remarked how pleased he was to see such a fine body of voluntary workers interesting themselves in all ARP work. The party was divided into four groups, Mr Roxburgh taking the first, Mr Craig the second, Mr Marshall the third and Mr Gentles the fourth. They then proceeded to the newly constructed tunnel intended to house all the workers, and the four representatives of the firm explained in detail the system to the respective groups.

"Mr J Addison, the newly appointed head warden for the town, thanked the directors for the permission to see the provision made for the safety of the workers, and the four representatives of the firm for the able manner in which they had explained the system.

"The ARP workers went away fully convinced it was the last word in air raid shelter construction. The shelter would be able to house all the workers in an emergency. It had electric light throughout, a fresh air system, first aid boxes an emergency lighting system and telephone communication. The tunnel is built under solid rock 40 feet below the surface.

"Ex-servicemen present were convinced that no bomb ever made would be able to penetrate the tunnel. The workers therefore, can be content to know that the Directors have built a safe retreat and one of the most up to date if not the most up to date, in Great Britain. It is believed that the cost of the system is in the region of £10,000.

"The ARP party afterwards paid a visit to the first aid post at the Boglestone and were more than surprised at the complete arrangements that had been made at this place to deal with any casualties that might require attention. The visitation of these places was organised by Mr Cheshire, post warden, with approval of Sergeant Watt and Mr Addison, in order to satisfy the wardens with arrangements which had been made and who were curious to see for themselves the very fine shelter which had been approved for the workers of 'The Gourock'."



the lavatories of the air raid shelter

"When the real dangers of bombing got through to the understanding of the authorities, the organisation at the Port Glasgow works geared to meet the threats implicit in the enemy's clever use of incendiaries as providing guiding lights for the bombers. Thus fifty fire-watchers were on duty every night, in and about the rambling buildings, and an eight-man fire brigade was formed and trained. The labour force could not provide a nightly rota of fifty men and reinforcements had to be brought in from less vulnerable industries in Port Glasgow, notably from the shipyards.

"In due course, the 'phoney' phase of the war passing, the Directors caused a long tunnel to be cut into the hillside behind the works, and it was certainly one of the largest and safest shelters provided for its workers by an industrial concern, in Scotland at least. Over 200 yards long, most of it 45 feet down under solid rock, it could accommodate 1000 people. The appointments included a control room, a sick bay, a food store and ample lavatory accommodation; air-conditioning and heating systems were installed. The tunnel was divided into five sections, each with its own separate entrance, each well baffled from the others. There was ample room for all the workers and office staff in the Port Glasgow Factory.

"While it was needed, however, this superlative shelter gave the men in charge many worries of the social kind. Employees who lived near the works were given passes for their families and during any hour of alarm the tunnel housed a very strange aggregation of humanity, from day old babies to nearly helpless ancients.

"When the alarms sounded strangers sought to gain entrance and authentic pass holders had difficulty in fighting their way through the crowds outside the gates. A sort of illicit traffic in passes developed; on one occasion the police had to be called in to handle the crowd nearly out of control. These proceedings were too often diversified by the presence of seafaring men off the many ships at anchor off Greenock, human jetsam of very dangerous seas eager to attract the favours of the mill girls."

The Gourock by George Blake

Recalling time spent in the Mill's Air Raid Shelter

by John Anderson

I was twelve years old and my mother took us to the shelter on the nights of the Blitz. I remember Bouverie being hit; we knew because the tremors caused people to be thrown from their beds to the floor, although the shelter withstood the blast and offered accommodation to the workers whilst the war raged on.

John Anderson and Sir Stanley Spencer

by John Anderson

Sir Stanley Spencer was sent to Port Glasgow as the Governments War Artist in order to document shipbuilding on the Clyde.

Many people recall memories of meeting Sir Stanley, John from Port Glasgow was an apprentice electrician in the shipyards and recalled how he would help Sir Stanley get around with all of his equipment, which he kept in an old pram.



Sir Stanley Spencer observing the work in the yards

John also became one of Sir Stanley's subjects and when he had finished the sketch, he gave it to John, but unfortunately, John has lost track of the drawing, which would probably fetch a handsome sum in today's market. The War ended in 1945.



The War Memorial today does not have the names of the victims who died in the Blitz.

Christmas Party in the Boys Brigade halls for the children who lived in Glen Avenue – 1944.

many fathers were in the Armed Forces during the war, parents who were at home ensured special times were celebrated.



Thomas O'Kane, photographer

by John O'Kane

People of a certain age will remember Docherty's Shoe Repairs in Church Street, Port Glasgow. This was run by my father Thomas O'Kane and my mum Bridie, who served in the front shop.

Thomas was a keen amateur photographer. He would spend his lunch breaks, weather permitting, and weekends on walks around the harbour or surrounding areas, dragging my brother and myself with him.

Sometimes we would go as far afield as Kilmacolm, arriving "two inches shorter", but an ice-cream and a coffee in the café made it all ok.



Thomas O'Kane

To improve his skills he joined the Greenock Co-operative Camera Club, whose base was in Campbell Street, Greenock. He won many competitions.

Who could have foreseen the changes to the area, which Thomas captured on many of his walks?

The re-routing of the A8, the filling in of the harbour where many small boats had berthed in safety, providing many a picturesque scene; they now have to berth in open water next to the Castle. Even the dry dock, which was owned by Lamonts, one of the oldest in Scotland if not Britain is now under the Health Centres car park area.

My father's photography has left a visual diary of the way things were and will never be that way again. I don't say it was better then – we can recall the smoke coming from the chimneys of home and industry, hence the saying "the dirty wee Port"

One of my dad's favourite places was the Timber Ponds at Woodhall, and the old shipyard cranes provided a feast of images and a precious visual history as these scenes are all long gone now.

Our house had a cloakroom, which became his dark room for developing film. This was a no-go area when he was at work. To see a blank piece of paper put into a dish of developer and watch an image appear was truly magical.

My dad died in 1979 leaving a fantastic trail of images of Port Glasgow which are as unique and individual as he was. Evidence of his skills are scattered throughout the book.

I hope that you enjoy his work.





The shops of Port Glasgow

In olden times the streets of Port Glasgow were lined with shops of all descriptions. Few people had to walk any distance for the necessities of life, or even the luxuries. Let's take a journey through time and see.

Probably the earliest source for the town's shops is the 1831-32 edition of Fowler's Commercial Directory of Renfrewshire. This claims to be a list of the merchants, traders, manufacturers and principal inhabitants, and this is fair enough, but at first reading it is not possible to say for sure if "Mrs Forgie, grocer, Bay Street", refers to a shop, or is simply the home address of Mrs Forgie who happens to be a grocer. However, even in more recent times, many shops had the shopkeeper's house at the back, so it is not unlikely Mrs Forgie had a grocer's shop on Bay Street.

At the 1831 census the town's population was given as 4192 in 1279 families, 435 people being in trade and manufacture, and the directory lists 405 people, of whom about 153 have shopkeeper-type descriptions.

The principal inhabitants are easily picked out - they would definitely not have been grocers, bakers or the like, so we can be reasonably certain entries with shopkeeper-type occupations listed were shops or similar. On that basis there were around 153 shops in the town in 1831. Some sold more than one item, in combinations we'd now think quite odd, eg, pye(!) & pastry baker and spirit dealer or coal merchant and spirit dealer.

The 1831 list was

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ 9 bakers | ■ 2 booksellers |
| ■ 1 china & stoneware merchant | ■ 7 tailor & clothiers |
| ■ 1 woollen & linen draper, silk mercer and haberdasher | |
| ■ 3 merchant tailors | ■ 4 cloth merchants |
| ■ 4 hairdressers | ■ 1 dressmaker |
| ■ 1 corset & dress maker | ■ 3 milliner & dressmakers |
| ■ 1 customer weaver | ■ 1 hosier |
| ■ 3 hatters | ■ 1 fish curer and stoneware merchant |
| ■ 5 butchers | ■ 10 grocers |
| ■ 2 tea dealers | ■ 12 grocer & spirit merchants |
| ■ 3 tobacconists | ■ 45 spirit dealers (including 6 inns) |
| ■ 1 grocer & tobacconist | ■ 1 coal merchant & spirit dealer |
| ■ 1 druggist | ■ 3 watch & clock makers |
| ■ 9 boot & shoemakers | ■ 1 upholsterer |
| ■ 1 broker | ■ 2 chandlers |
| ■ 1 tinplate worker | ■ 1 coffee room |
| ■ 2 fruit shops | ■ 1 furnishings shop |
| ■ 1 coal & dung merchant. | |
| ■ 8 people of different occupations (coal merchant, joiner, cooper, mariner, fruiterer, baker, carpenter, nail manufacturer) also selling spirits | |

There's a total absence of dairies, confectioners, fishmongers and ironmongers, but the dung merchant makes up for it. The 1836 Statistical Account says the town had 71 pubs in that year, which is not far from the above, if we allow all spirit dealers to be counted.



The actual descriptions of some in the directory are more exotic than as given above. One of the hatters was "a leghorn and straw hat maker". A leghorn hat was made from a special kind of straw, often imported from Livorno (Leghorn) in Italy - they were often worn by women, and were of various shapes including bonnets.

We jump forward 74 years, and the 1905 Directory lists around 250 shops in the town

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ 13 bakers | ■ 10 booksellers & stationers |
| ■ 4 china merchants | ■ 19 confectioners |
| ■ 9 dairies | ■ 17 drapers |
| ■ 8 tailors & clothiers | ■ 1 hatter |
| ■ 1 wool dealer | ■ 1 dyer |
| ■ 4 fishmongers & poulterers | ■ 15 butchers |
| ■ 56 grocers & general merchants | ■ 9 hairdressers |
| ■ 7 ironmongers | ■ 3 milliners & dressmakers |
| ■ 8 pawnbrokers | ■ 1 photographer |
| ■ 1 poulterer | ■ 3 printers |
| ■ 3 provision merchants | ■ 1 purveyors |
| ■ 32 spirit dealers (including pubs) | ■ 1 fancy goods |
| ■ 16 tobacconists | ■ 3 watchmakers & jewellers. |

We can't be sure the Directory listed every shop, so the true total could be higher. There is nothing exotic here, but a fine mix of shops all the same.

When the Bay area and the town centre were redeveloped in the early 1900s, the new buildings contained far less shops.

Any changes in the town between then and 1940 will not have greatly affected the number of shops, so the total in the 1940 Directory will be a fair representation of what shops were there from the redevelopment.

In 1940 there were about 170 shops listed and probably a good many more, some omissions will be noted by those who can recall the shops.

The 1940 list was

- 1 baker & confectioner
- 1 newsagent & stationer
- 1 printer
- 26 confectioners
- 6 dairies
- 11 drapers
- 1 outfitter
- 9 butchers
- 6 hairdressers
- 2 pawnbrokers
- 4 licenced grocers
- 3 tobacconists
- 1 greengrocer
- 1 drysalter
- 1 electrical and radio
- 7 boot & shoe
- 1 plumber
- 1 paint & wallpaper shop
- 1 hardware shop
- 2 dentists
- 1 marine store
- 2 restaurants.
- 6 stationers
- 1 printer & stationer
- 4 newsagents
- 4 fruiterer & confectioners
- 1 dairy & confectioner
- 8 tailors & clothiers
- 1 fishmonger & poulterer
- 11 grocers
- 4 ironmongers
- 13 spirit dealers (including pubs and hotel)
- 1 provision merchant
- 1 watchmaker
- 1 fruiterer & florist
- 1 cycle & gramophone agent
- 4 chemists
- 1 leather merchant
- 2 decorators
- 1 fish restaurant
- 1 general dealer
- 3 coal merchants
- 1 café



looking onto Port Glasgow town centre

One interesting feature is the almost complete lack of fish restaurants. This might reflect the goings on of the times, when Italian businesses were subjected to break-ins and looting.

From 1940 the shipyard expansion and realignments of the A8 destroyed whole areas, ergo the shop situation cannot have changed all that much. So we arrive at the present, when the A8 seems to have settled down.



lower Princes Street circa 1950's

At present (2009) the situation is fluid, shops open, close and move, but there are around 75 shops in the town of the following mix

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ■ 3 bakers | ■ 1 post office & newsagent |
| ■ 6 newsagents | ■ 2 butchers |
| ■ 1 grocer | ■ 7 small self-service stores |
| ■ 5 pubs | ■ 2 licenced grocers |
| ■ 3 chemists | ■ 2 fish restaurants |
| ■ 4 gents' hairdressers | ■ 5 ladies' hairdressers |
| ■ 2 beauty salons | ■ 1 bridal wear |
| ■ 1 baby clothes | ■ 1 knitting and sewing supplies |
| ■ 1 ladies & children's clothing | ■ 1 paint & wallpaper |
| ■ 1 fridge repair | ■ 1 white goods |
| ■ 1 cards & fancy goods | ■ 2 freezer stores |
| ■ 1 tanning shop | ■ 1 diving equipment |
| ■ 1 travel agent | ■ 1 carpets & flooring |
| ■ 4 charity shops | ■ 2 cafés |
| ■ 4 take-aways | ■ 1 amusement arcade |
| ■ 2 general stores | ■ 4 bookmakers |
| ■ 1 large supermarket | ■ 1 regeneration centre |



lower Princes Street today

In addition to the above, there are three or four shops that are hard to classify, such as cashing cheques or offering financial advice, and additionally there are currently about twelve empty shops.

Maggie Henderson's shop

by Hugh McIntyre

Great aunt Maggie was often referred to as Wee Maggie, and truth be told she wasn't all that tall.

She was born at the Glen in 1878, not far along Ardgowan Street from where her shop would be, and she died in Auchenbothie House, near Kilmacolm in 1961. Her older sister, Lizzie, married my grandfather, Hugh McIntyre, and her younger sister, Martha, married Willie Duff and moved to Bishopton.

Her brothers, James and William, were shipwrights - James went to Australia with his English wife, Beatrice Dawe, in 1911, and William drowned in Liverpool's Sandon Dock during 1907. James had no children and William was single - Martha had two daughters and one granddaughter. Henderson descendants are not exactly thick on the ground.



Maggie Henderson

Maggie never married - we had a tale, that was never confirmed, of a sweetheart who died in WWI, someone who had to do with the Glen Mill. When I knew her she was a plain wee lady, a kenspeckle figure running her greengrocer's shop at the Glen. In earlier life she had apparently been a beauty, so maybe the tale was true.

She was a confectioner and greengrocer; her shop sold fruit and vegetables, sweets, cigarettes and tobacco, bread and biscuits, and general groceries such as cans of soup and beans. The potatoes were in a bunker at the back of the shop with a wee door at the bottom where they could be shovelled out and the biscuits were in a rack of glass-topped boxes.

Loose pipe tobacco came in a roll and was cut with a guillotine, hinged at one end - it was sold by the ounce. Cakes and scones were kept in a glass cupboard at the far end of the counter. Milk, for her own use - she didn't sell it, was delivered by Johnny Lyle from Kilmacolm, run from a churn into Maggie's can.

She had a sense of humour that belied her staid appearance and manner. She asked me once if I'd heard about the public lavatory that was opened by a peer of the realm, and she was fond of singing a song that went, "Horsey, keep your tail up, and let the sun shine in."

Maggie's father, William Henderson, came from Stirling to lodge with Mrs McDougall on Watt Street in Greenock, the house is still there, and her mother, Agnes Adam, got a job as a servant in 15 Union Street not far away. William drove a "lemonade van", horse drawn, for a local company. Perhaps he delivered bottles to 15 Union Street and that was how they met.

While Agnes was in service at Union Street, her family were a long way away, up at the Overton Paper Mill. Like all of her siblings, she was born in Elderslie - they came to Overton about 1857.

After Agnes Adam and William Henderson married in 1872, William went into business with her older brother, Alexander, manufacturing aerated waters at a place on Water Street in Port Glasgow; Water Street ran towards the river from opposite the foot of King Street.

William and Agnes moved to Port Glasgow in the early 1870's, to Houston Place at the corner of Houston Street and Ardgowan Street. William, we were told, "liked a good drink", and either because of this or despite it, he and Alexander eventually parted and William took his family to Rothesay, intending to start up there. They didn't stay long.



the shop at 17 Ardgowan Street

Family legend again - the horse dropped dead on a brae in Rothesay, and that was that; they returned to the Glen. Not long after that, around 1889, William took himself off to Australia and was never seen again. Family legend didn't go the length of saying what happened to him - the stone in Port Glasgow Cemetery says he died there in 1891. I searched as did others search, but nary a trace did we find. No doubt that was why his son, James, went there in 1911.

On the assumption that she was a widow, Agnes opened a shop at the Glen, next to Morrison's pub. She later moved across the street to 15 Ardgowan Street, before moving once again to larger premises at No 17. Someone else took over the shop at No 15.

When her mother died in 1928, great aunt Maggie took over the shop and ran it until she retired in the 1950's. She lived in the two-room house behind the shop, a kitchen and a bedroom, with a maroon velvet curtain in the doorway between them. In the bedroom stood a tall, bow-fronted chest of drawers, and on the wall above it was a framed watercolour picture of the SS Aquitania.

On top of the chest of drawers were two thick books, a family Bible and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Somewhere in the room there were big leather-bound albums of her family photographs. The Bible has survived, but its companion disappeared long ago. I first saw the photo albums not long before she died and we asked her if she could identify some of the people in them. A good many are of her family's wide circle of friends in Port Glasgow and Greenock, some dating from the mid to late 1800's.

A memory of Jeannie Dougan

by Robert Kane

I was brought up at 27 Shore Street with my immediate family and my granny McKay. She was at one time the owner of a little grocery store at the bottom of Scott's Lane, where she sold everything from pickled herrings to soap. In those days she used to have flour delivered to the shop in cotton sacks, and the cotton was of such good quality that she would make shorts out of it for the children around Shore Street.

The only problem with this was that the sacks were numbered, and she never could get rid of the numbers. She would boil them and they would fade, but the numbers were still visible, sometimes on the seat of the shorts. In those days people were grateful for what they got, so didn't worry about the numbers however, kids being kids, they would play in the close and granny would chase them.

She could never catch them, so she used to shout after them, "Aye, you can run, but I've got your number."

Port Glasgow and the Queen

"CORONATION EDITION Community Television"

Port Glasgow Express, Friday, June 5th 1953

"A large number of people went to the Town Hall where the Civil Defence workers had installed a number of TV sets for the public.

"They gasped at each new angle, the royal procession and cheering mildly when the Queen passed, they imagined themselves to be standing right in front of that huge crowd with none between them and the glittering coach. It was indeed a nice way to spend the day.

"But as teatime approached, the broadcast over and the television darkened, more people filled the streets and the first sign of Coronation activity was on".

In 1958 Port Glasgow welcomed the Queen to the town. This would be the town's third Royal Visit.



the queen during her
1958 visit to the town

SEVEN MINUTE STOP

Greenock Telegraph

"During a seven-minute stop, Provost Edward Docherty and members of Port Glasgow Town Council will be presented to Her Majesty and the Duke.

"Before the Royal arrival at Greenock, the expected large waiting crowds at Clyde Square will be entertained by the Royal Marine Band of the C-in-C Home Fleet.

"Crush barriers are being erected in Hamilton Street at either end of the Municipal Buildings and along the south pavement. Viewing platforms for the public are, however, being constructed."



festivities for the queen's visit in 1958 - street party outside 24 Bay Street



a function held at Port Glasgow town hall on the day of the visit

Washing machines

"WASHING MACHINES TO BE INSTALLED AT BATHS New Boon for Housewives"

"In modernising the public washhouses in Bay Street, the town council have purchased at an estimated cost of £1132, four new washing machines which are expected to be installed within the next month.

"Convener of the Baths and Washhouses, Councillor Mooney, said last night that he thought the machines would be a big success. He, along with several other councillors, had seen them in operation in other towns, and he was quite sure that they would be a big boon to the housewives of Port Glasgow.

BIG DEMAND

"At present, Port housewives visiting the public washhouses pay 4d per hour for the use of a stall where they may spend several hours scrubbing and wringing out the week's wash.

"Under the new scheme however one woman is given the use of a machine in which she puts her clothes - whites in one cubicle and colours in another, turns on the power and stands by for half an hour.

"During that time she may even do some shopping.

"On her return, the clothes are brought out, put through an extractor in which they are left slightly damp. Once home the clothes are ready for ironing.

"The installation of these machines is regarded as one of the biggest steps yet taken by the Council towards the improvement of the washhouses. There will only be a gradual changeover however, even when all four machines are in operation, there will still be a few of the old stalls.

"Yesterday 108 women made use of the public washhouses. No doubt, they too are hopeful that the machines will be a success and so alleviate the hours of drudgery spent behind the washboard.

Sixty Years On

"The Baths and Washhouses were opened in 1894 at a cost of £5700, which was met by the late Mr Joseph Russell shipbuilder. A few years after the opening the Town Council added 12 stalls to the original 12 provided by the donor"



the old wash houses in Port Glasgow town centre

The local burghs

BURGHs COMING TOGETHER 1975

In 1975 the three burghs of Gourock, Greenock and Port Glasgow came together to become Inverclyde which is run by one Central Government, which is located in Greenock. The area was a district in its own right, within Strathclyde Region, from 1975 until 1996. It is now one of Scotland's 32 council areas bordering Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire.



The Port, Past - Present, 1775-1975 by Janetta Bowie

"Soon Port Glasgow along with Greenock and Gourock will be going, it is hoped hand-in-hand, into Inverclyde, under the reorganisation of local government in May 1975. Greenockians for a long time, and it is true that the forest that used to separate them at Bogston has long since disappeared.

"We shall have a larger identity, to which Port Glasgow has a great deal of its unique self to contribute. It is after all still the same place; it will still have its shores and its braes, its views and its warm-hearted folks.

"In 1597 Sir Patrick Maxwell inscribed over the doorway of his castle words, which could be applied in good will to the folk of Port Glasgow in this 200th year of their civic life."

"The blessings of God be herein"

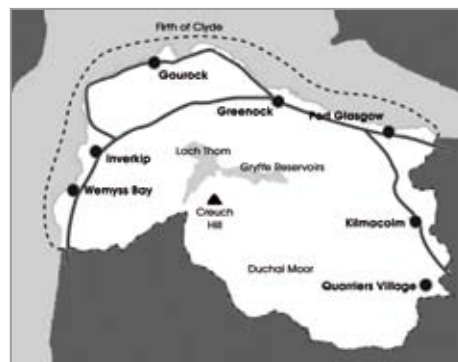
"MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST" (abridged) Greenock Telegraph

"Dear Citizen,

"As from the 16th May, responsibility for all local authority services will pass from the former Town and County Councils to the new district and regional councils.

"The area will be known as Inverclyde District council and each of the 23 wards from Wemyss Bay to Kilmacolm will be represented by an individual Councillor who, like myself, is determined to make this the finest District in Scotland.

"It is a pity that the new District is born in a time of financial difficulty, but with your help, the District Council will strive to get our money's worth and make Inverclyde a place to be proud of.



Inverclyde region

"With best wishes
John Walsh, Provost of Inverclyde"

Woodhall - a house and housing scheme

by Hugh McIntyre

In 1860, the Paisley shipbuilding firm of Blackwood & Gordon created a small shipyard in Port Glasgow near Newark Castle. This was much later to be the yard of James Lamont and Co.

Thomas Blackwood moved from Paisley to Port Glasgow and in 1863 he was living at Glenclune. By 1868 he had built Woodhall, or Wood Hall, up the hill from Parklee on the riverside section of the estate of Park. The Port Glasgow shipyard failed in 1885 and Thomas died 6 years later at Glenneuk on Clune Brae.



Wood Hall in the early 1900's

The house was still standing in March 1935. It had an ornate, hand-carved staircase and panelling, and beautiful stained glass windows.

Some in the town said it should have been preserved, but the Council said the upkeep would be too costly, and it was demolished.

"NEW SUBURB ON WOODED ESTATE, DEVELOPMENT OF EAST-END"

Greenock Telegraph, 8th June 1935

"One of the most ambitious housing schemes ever prepared in the town of Port Glasgow is shortly to be embarked upon. Over three hundred houses will be erected on the beautiful estate of Woodhall, which has been acquired by the Town Council. Extending over 58 acres, the grounds are well wooded and attractively laid out in avenues."



the last remaining tenements in Woodhall

Provost Wilson admitted to the paper that he had been surprised to learn that between 50% and 60% of houses in the town had only one or two apartments. For this reason, he said, no house at Woodhall would have less than three apartments.

One feature proposed was a row of tenements facing the Glasgow Road, set back from the road if possible, with little gardens and ideally in blocks of four (Woodhall Terrace).

Twenty-three blocks of dwellings would face the Old Langbank Road (Parkhill Avenue). Streets would be formed using the existing avenues where possible.

The Burgh boundary was to be extended to allow a place for buses to turn, instead of at the foot of Heggies Avenue. This became Woodhall Square. The Provost also talked about the possibility of yet another development, facing the river at Carnegie, on recreation grounds already owned by the Parks Department. This was built as Kelburn Terrace.



Boglestone

Boglestone House

"This large house, situated about midway between Port Glasgow and Kilmacolm, was totally destroyed by fire yesterday, the outbreak taking place between three and four o'clock in the afternoon.

"When the alarm was given, a message was despatched to Port Glasgow for the fire brigade, but as the institution does not possess a fire engine and as the fire was outwith the burgh boundaries, the brigade did not turn out. The occupants did their best to stay the progress of the flames, but their efforts in this direction proved unavailing and the fire raged unchecked until the work of destruction was completed.



views of Boglestone House prior to its demolition in the 1960's

"The house was a square building of three storeys and had an ornate tower on the south east corner which was erected twenty years ago in 1874 by the late John Hamilton of Port Glasgow. The building was originally intended to be an hotel, in the event of a passenger station being formed at that point on the Glasgow and Southern Western Railway.

"The hopes of the builder were never realised and the house was never occupied for the purpose for which it was originally intended. Built on ground belonging to Colonel Buchanan of Drumpellier, the building, shortly after its construction, reverted to the superior and it has been somewhat of a white elephant ever since. Included within its grounds is the famed Bogle Stone which is well known in the history of Renfrewshire and from which the house derived its name."

Boglestone House was rebuilt and stood in the area until the 1960s where it was once more demolished to make way for a new housing estate. Boglestone was named after the Bogal Stone located around the top of the Clune Brae. The area now includes housing, but also serves as an important hub for upper Port Glasgow, offering amenities such as education, shopping, health centres and leisure.



the Bogal Stone in upper Port Glasgow

The new Newark

NEWARK PRIMARY SCHOOL FULL CIRCLE

Construction began in early 2007 on a new state-of-the-art school that would replace the aging buildings of the Boglestone, Slaemuir and Highholm primaries. Indeed, Boglestone Primary, a non-denominational school, was previously on the site as was St Michaels Catholic Primary School. Both schools were demolished through the local council's plans to update or renew all local school buildings.

Newark Primary School was opened by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on Thursday the 28th of August 2008.



Gordon Brown meets some of the Newark Primary children before the formal opening of the building

Quite ironically Newark's Headteacher Lillian Hasson was in the same year as Mr Brown when both were pupils at Kirkcaldy High School in Fife.

"This is an example of the whole community coming together to build an extraordinary new facility for generations of our children.

"The purpose of education is so people can bridge the gap between what they are and what they have it in themselves to become. The purpose of education is so that everyone can rise as far as their talents can take them.

"I am proud that what we have been trying to do over the last 10 years is to increase the level of investment in every child in every school in every part of the country."

The £10 million pound school has micro wind turbines and energy efficient lighting, ventilation and heating systems to reduce its carbon footprint. It has the capacity to accommodate a maximum of 594 children.

"Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another"

Gilbert K. Chesterton



the new Newark school, nominated for the "Best public building" design award, 2009

It is somewhat fitting that this book ends with the story of a statesman opening the new Newark, just as there was a tale of a statesman in residence at Newark Castle when this brief jaunt through the ages began. We hope that you have enjoyed reading this peoples' history.

What is it you actually do here?

7½ John Wood Street has now been open for 4 years, and we've had literally thousands of people over the door in that time. But there still isn't a week goes by, that we don't welcome some new folk into the centre, or see folk gazing in the windows looking confused.

What we "do" at 7½ maybe isn't always obvious from the outside, and it's certainly not obvious from our name, even the posh name "Port Glasgow Community Regeneration Centre".



the centre at 7½ John Wood Street

7½ John Wood Street is a place for Portonians to access advice, information and support. From counselling services and benefit advice, through to healthy living and employability training, there are a huge range of opportunities on offer. There are no charges for any of the services to local and voluntary groups.

Regeneration is one of those words that gets used all the time. But what does it actually mean? Is it a new Tesco? New houses? Safer streets? Physical regeneration of an area is easy, that's just buildings. 7½ John Wood Street is about ensuring the community of Port Glasgow isn't left behind in the regeneration process.

It provides space for support groups to come and deliver services within the Port and it also provides space and support for new Port Glasgow based community groups to develop.

The Centre is also a place where people are able to get a right to reply on the issues affecting this community. Our Community Futures and Heritage programmes give people a chance to celebrate the rich history of Port Glasgow and help get involved in planning the future.

And we're always looking for the community to get involved in shaping the services on offer. Genuinely. We don't intend to sit here offering services people aren't interested in. We want to be as responsive as we can to the Port Glasgow community.

So drop in today for a visit. We'll show you round your centre, give you the latest on what services are on offer, and maybe you can give us a few suggestions of what else you'd like to see.

Port Glasgow Community Regeneration Centre
7½ John Wood Street
Port Glasgow
PA14 5HU


www.trustregeneration.org.uk

Articles

Foreword: Paul Bristow
 From the castle to the school: Hugh McIntyre
 The lawless Port: Hugh McIntyre
 The water supply: Hugh McIntyre
 The phases of the bay area: Hugh McIntyre and Jim Devenay
 Family photos: Jim Devenay
 How to populate a town: George Gorman
 The Gourrock Ropeworks: Jim Devenay
 Mortimer Dougan: Rab Kane
 The iron bridge and the Port Glasgow wet dock disaster: Hugh McIntyre
 A shipbuilding family: Hugh McIntyre
 The visit of King George V: Hugh McIntyre
 World War I: Ruby Anderson
 World War II: Anonymous contributors and Robert Watt
 The Mill air raid shelter: John Anderson
 Sir Stanley Spencer: John Anderson
 Thomas O'Kane, photographer: John O'Kane
 Maggie Henderson's shop: Hugh McIntyre
 Woodhall - a house and housing scheme: Hugh McIntyre

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An aerial photograph of Port Glasgow, Scotland, showing a dense residential area with terraced houses in the foreground, a large body of water (the Firth of Clyde) in the middle ground, and rolling hills in the background under a cloudy sky.

a peoples' history of Port Glasgow



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