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# NEWSLETTER

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In our Spring newsletter one thing to be drawn to your attention is that recently we thought we would have to change the name of our society. The reason for that was that we intended to set up a website and the name we have had already been used. Two websites should not have the same name. The other Bothwell Historical Society is on the other side of the planet, in Tasmania! That Bothwell is not in the same league as ours, our history goes back a very long way indeed. We now have our own website at [bothwellhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://bothwellhistoricalsociety.co.uk). It is still in its early stages and is very much a 'work in progress'.



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The origins of Bothwell Historical Society were as part of the village's Scarecrow Festival (2011). The first committee meeting was held in May 2011 to draw up a constitution and develop a programme for the year.

Since then, although conscious of the need to avoid hubris, members may allow themselves a modest pat on the back for a successful first year.

We are grateful to Professor Tom Devine who agreed to be our Honorary President for his support and his encouragement for the work of the society. Professor Devine has agreed to speak to us on a date as yet to be arranged in February or March next year.

Membership now stands at 60. Please encourage members of your family and friends to join us and support our work in generating interest in the history of our community and of our country. The cost of membership is £10 per family per year.

The September exhibition on "Old Bothwell" attracted a great deal of interest and the feedback from visitors was very positive. Local primary schools were involved in the opening ceremony and we look forward to continuing the good relationship we have with the Head Teachers, staff and pupils of our excellent schools

Our Speakers' programme (drawing initially on committee members Jack Gallacher, Bill Gow and George Maxwell) was well received and attendances averaged around 50. Links have been established with similar organisations to our own and we hope to benefit from the experiences of liaising with other groups.

It is our intention to create an archive of local material. To this end a filing cabinet has been acquired and is located in a room in Bothwell Library. Committee member John Hart has agreed to be our archivist. We would be grateful for donations from local people of documents, photographs or any other appropriate material which may be reproduced and returned to the owners if required.

Preparations are already underway for the session 2012/13. These include continuing the Oral History Project, the Bothwell 2012 Photography Project, a further exhibition to coincide with the 2012 Scarecrow Festival and a programme of speakers. We are currently investigating the development of a web site. Members will continue to be informed of events by email, telephone, the local paper and in the events section of the magazine, "History Scotland."

Although all of our committee members have reached the stage in life when in some societies they might be defined as "wise" because of their three score years and whatever, not one of us would make claims to wisdom. This being so, we would warmly accept any suggestions, comments or indeed criticisms from anyone to help us in our avowed aim to encourage an interest in the fascinating history of our community and our country.

Our thanks to the members of Bothwell Historical Society for supporting us in our first year and we look forward with anticipation to our second session.

## Talks Given by Committee Members.

The first talk was given by our chairman Jack Gallacher on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011. His talk "*Where a River Bends*", reflecting Bothwell's geographical location, gave an account of the great events of Scottish and European history which took place in Bothwell in centuries past. Many famous personalities were associated with the village right down to modern times



The second talk was on the 15<sup>th</sup> February and was given by Bill Gow on the subject of "*The Development of Water Services in Lanarkshire*"

Bill opened his talk by describing the poor sanitary conditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century sewerage systems were being built and he explained the development of Daldowie sewage treatment works.

The water supply for Bothwell was initially from wells but by 1881 a piped supply was obtained from Dunside, near Lesmahagow. Bill then talked about the multitude of burgh and county reservoirs in South Lanarkshire and how this led to the formation in 1968 of the Lanarkshire Water Board and eventually in 2002 to the Scottish Water Authority.

Bill concluded his talk by recounting the turbulent times in the 1850's when Hamilton Burgh fought to get acceptance of "That obnoxious and tyrannical measure the Hamilton Water Works Bill."

The third talk was given by George Maxwell on the 14th March on the subject of "*Blantyre's Mining Disasters*".

George's talk was most informative explaining the danger of a small explosion of methane, known as firedamp, becoming a violent, widespread explosion of dry coal dust.

He also informed us of the differing types of coal and the various uses for each type, from iron making to ordinary house coal.



## Memories of Old Bothwell

The Society intends to compile and publish a book "Memories of Old Bothwell." It will be a mixture of photographs and articles about Bothwell. We already have a number of suitable items for the book but would welcome more contributions.

- ◆ Do you have an ancestor of whom you could write?
- ◆ Is there an interesting history to your house or business?
- ◆ Are there any stories you can tell about life in Bothwell in times past?

The articles need not be long, normally no more than a page, but two or three paragraphs would be acceptable.

Also do you have old (pre 1960's) photos of Bothwell, the Primary School, sports, bowling, Bothwell weddings or family groups? If so we would carefully copy them and return them to you. If you have any suitable material, please get in touch with Bill Gow, phone 01698 858505 or email [bill.gow@talktalk.net](mailto:bill.gow@talktalk.net)

## Photo Bothwell 2012

The project to photograph all of Bothwell this year is now well underway. 16 people have agreed to take part in the photographic survey which will cover all the streets and areas of interest in Bothwell. The object of the project is to lay down, for future generations, a record of what Bothwell was like in 2012. One early bird has already completed his area but there are still 10 months to go ....

Our village needs this project as can be seen from the examples below. These changes have occurred over just a few years and may well change again in the future. If you have any photographs showing changes such as these, or even single old photos, please let us know. We can copy them and return your originals.



## Oral history recording

As part of our activities for the year 2012, we have a project to record people's memories of Bothwell. There are many residents of Bothwell and surrounding areas whose memories go back quite a long way and we would love to capture these for posterity.

A start has been made in collecting local memories and these recordings will be transferred to CDs for archiving locally and possibly in the National Archives of Scotland. The format for these recordings is intended to be as informal as possible to allow the interviewee to be relaxed and not feel under any pressure.

The recording equipment we use is a very small digital recorder about the size of a small mobile 'phone. This is left on a table to pick up the voices of both interviewer and interviewee. The recorder is not in any way intimidating and can be ignored allowing free thoughts and speech, without some large tape recorder and microphones dominating the scene.

We have a short list of people who have volunteered to share their memories and have them recorded. If you or someone you know, would like to take part in the project, please let us know. Recordings will be done in the volunteer's home to make the experience as relaxed as possible.

## **BRIGHTER BOTHWELL and THE COVENANTERS' FIELD**

As a society interested in preserving the heritage of our community for the benefit of future generations, we share the concerns of our colleagues and friends in Brighter Bothwell about the prospect of housing development taking place on the Covenanters' Field. Not only is this last remnant of the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, an important event in Scottish history, but also in terms of the wider history of these islands. So much of our heritage has been lost that we must make every effort to preserve what remains.

Where there has been sensitive development of a threatened historic site such as Chatelherault, not only has the environment been enhanced but the economy has been stimulated. The same could apply to the Covenanters' Field. The following quotation is from Brighter Bothwell's recent newsletter.

"If you feel you wish to support us in this venture (the preservation of the Covenanters' Field for the benefit of everyone in the community of Bothwell) we would urge you to send an email of support to [brighter@visitbothwell.com](mailto:brighter@visitbothwell.com) or a letter to Bill Jack, Brighter Bothwell, 33 Laighlands Road, Bothwell G71 8AL. Without your demonstration of support we will almost certainly lose the field."

**Please lend your support to this campaign.**



## Bothwell library



Bothwell Library, currently housed in the historic Donald Institute, has recently undergone some refurbishment and is hosting the superb Marion Gilchrist Exhibition which is well worth a visit. Locals and visitors alike should also note the developing local history collection. Modern libraries are not only responsible for book collections but also for a veritable cornucopia of other services. The Library also acts as a focal point for the people of Bothwell and makes a big contribution to

the “Village” atmosphere of the community. Members of staff are committed, highly professional and very personable. As with all services, the Library needs to be used in order to survive so put away your Kindles and pay a visit to your library. You won’t be disappointed.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

### Scarecrow Festival Exhibition of Old Bothwell

Community Hall, Fallside Road, Bothwell  
 Sat 8<sup>th</sup> September 2012 11am-5pm  
 Sun 9<sup>th</sup> September 2012 11am-5pm

### Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012

*AGM followed by:*  
*“Archibald the Grim”* Talk by Ian McKellar.  
 Community Hall, Fallside Road at 7.45pm

### Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012

*“The Story of Passports,”* Talk by Robert Wilson CBE  
 Community Hall, Fallside Road at 7.45pm

## IN THE PIPELINE

Talk by Professor Tom Devine, our Honorary President, to be arranged for Feb or March 2013

## HISTORIC SCOTLAND.

Historic Scotland will be presenting an enactment of the 1337 siege of Bothwell Castle, *“The Return of the Murrays”* at Bothwell Castle on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> May from 12.00 - 4.00pm.