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# NEWSLETTER

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## CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS



Normally in my Chairman's remarks, I reflect on what has been happening in the Society. Once again

we can look back with satisfaction on the session which has passed. This time, however, I want to look forward to the weeks ahead as so much that is innovative and exciting is about to happen.

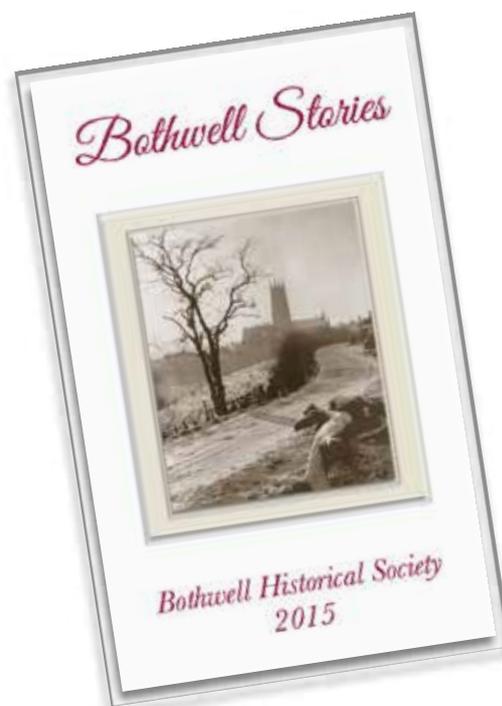
Our latest major project *Bothwell Stories* is now ready for publication and plans are afoot for a book launch to which you will be invited when these are finalised. I'm confident that you will support the Society by buying the book and by encouraging your friends to do so too. "*Lest We Forget*" was a sell out and we are convinced that *Bothwell Stories* will sell well too.

Together with our friends in Brighter Bothwell we have participated in the restoration of a coal hutch which will be a reminder of the community's mining heritage. It is intended that this monument will be situated on the triangle of ground at the junction of Main Street and Fallside Road, close to the area formerly occupied by miners' homes. We will keep you informed of developments here.

In September our contribution to the Scarecrow Festival will be another exhibition in the Library. Plans for this remain to be finalised as the opening hours of the Library have been cut back. Last year's exhibition was well attended and once again we hope to have you supporting the Historical Society by visiting the exhibition.

As always I am grateful to your hardworking office bearers and committee members and Liz Denton, not forgetting the support we have from you, our general members, for continuing to make Bothwell Historical Society, in the words of our Honorary President Sir Tom Devine, a "vibrant" organisation.

Jack Gallacher



## SHADOWS OF THE CITY



On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Bothwell Historical Society hosted the fifth and last “Talk” in our programme for 2014/15. We welcomed former teacher, historian and broadcaster Dan Sweeney (joint presenter of STV Glasgow’s “The People’s History Show”) who gave us a very enlightening account of the lost mansion houses of Glasgow. Dan’s narration was based on his recently published book, “Shadows Of The City.” His book focuses on a number of prestigious properties within the boundaries of the present City of Glasgow, which have failed to withstand the passage of time.

Dan gave us a brief introduction to Glasgow in the “Georgian era” and the City’s businessmen, who made their fortunes in trading in colonial goods after the Act of Union (1707) opened up English and colonial markets to Scottish goods. Trade with the American colonies however, was the key to the growth of the Glasgow economy after 1707. Glasgow took command of the tobacco trade and Glasgow merchants also imported sugar, rum, mahogany and raw cotton. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the landscape of Glasgow was studded with mansion houses, most of them the creation of the prosperous mercantile class that had risen to prominence during this spectacular growth in Glasgow’s economical activity. Sadly, most of them did not endure. Dan went on to focus his attention on a selection of “lost mansions”.

He very appropriately included residences which had a “Bothwell connection.”

For example, we looked at the Palladian - style Shawfield Mansion, which was situated on the Trongate at the end of what is now Glassford Street. Built by the merchant Daniel Campbell in 1711-12 it was the finest building of its time. Daniel Campbell purchased the estate of Woodhall in Lanarkshire in 1712. Woodhall was situated within the parish boundaries of Bothwell Kirk. Campbell became a Heritor of Bothwell Parish Church, and there is a monument to his memory on the West Wall of the Choir. We also looked at Mount Vernon House, built on lands formerly called Windyedge. The name Mount Vernon was given to the property by the Virginia merchant Robert Boyd, who purchased the Windyedge Estate in 1741, and renamed it Mount Vernon in honour of the popular naval hero of the time, Admiral Edward Vernon.

The estate was acquired around 1758 by George Buchanan, a member of a prominent family, who owned plantations in Virginia. He built the first part of Mount Vernon Mansion as his country house. In 1857, his descendants began feuing half-acre lots on the south side of the Mount Vernon estate on the Glasgow to Bothwell road. The aim was to create an “elegant suburb to vie with Bothwell.” Mount Vernon House latterly became a childrens’ home within the remit of Glasgow Corporation. It was demolished in 1932.

Dan’s talk was accompanied by a superb collection of photographs, drawings and engravings, all of which appear in his excellent book, which is available in Waterstone’s Bookshops and on line

In the time permitted, members and friends of the Society were treated to a “taster” of what is a very interesting and important aspect of the Glasgow story. All in all, we had a thoroughly enjoyable and very informative evening.

## BOTHWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

An important part of the work of the Society is liaising with local schools to promote an interest in our community and its history.

As a gesture to mark the significance of our links with the school, Chairman Jack Gallacher, accompanied by Eric Denton, visited Bothwell Primary School at the beginning of April. Jack was privileged to talk to the young people at a whole school assembly on the purpose of the Historical Society and then to present to the school a certificate of Honorary membership of Bothwell Historical Society. Following this, the Chairman presented certificates for good behaviour in school to a large number of children.

We are grateful to the Head Teacher, Mrs Paula Ross, the staff and the pupils for the warmth of their welcome and for their support for the Society



## HISTORY IS BEING MADE

There is a huge amount of work being done to the motorway systems in central Scotland at present. The M8 from Easterhouse to Newhouse is to be completely rebuilt as are the Maryville and Raith interchanges. On our own doorstep the Raith junction has been transformed with only a small part of the work having been started and so far with little disruption to traffic flow. That will probably change soon. There was a consultation recently in the Holiday Inn at Strathclyde Park to show the work in progress and what is yet to come. The work will take some considerable time to complete

and should improve the bottlenecks in the road system.

As a historical society we collect information and photographs for archiving so that future generations will see what our area was like in days gone past. Can you help? We would like as many people as possible to take some photographs of the work at present being undertaken (but always being aware of the dangers of getting too close to the working areas) so that our collection of photographs will be representative of today's view of the landscape. To the right are two photographs of the last time the road system was upgraded locally.



## AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April an email was received through our website “contact us” section. It was from a lady, Jonquil Covello, in Canada asking if we had any information about the house her mother had lived in as a child. The house had been named “Normanville” and was in Bothwell somewhere. We examined some of our old maps but that name did not appear on any of them so we had a problem finding it.

The next day we had an enquiry via Bothwell library on the same subject, this time from another lady, Kelly Saxberg of the Shebafilms Company. She told us she was making a documentary film about Sheila Burnford, the author, who was the mother of Jonquil. We responded to her enquiry as we had done with Jonquil, that we had been unable to find a house named Normanville in Bothwell. That seemed to

be the end of it until Kelly sent us a photo of the house taken somewhere around the 1940s.

It was then obvious about the exact location of the house, it is on Silverwells Crescent, although it has seen several changes over the years. We took some photos of the house as it is now and sent them to Jonquil and Kelly who were both delighted to receive them. Both ladies have, as promised, done a short story for us on Jonquil’s mother and the film they are making of her life. Jonquil’s mother was Sheila Burnford who wrote many books including the most famous one, “The Incredible Journey”. A summary of the intended film by Shebafilms is below.

Further information and pictures are contained in our book “*Bothwell Stories*”.

<https://shebafilms2.wordpress.com>

**One Woman's North - Sheila Burnford's Incredible Journey** is a documentary about a writer adventurer who embraced her environment and the culture and lifestyle of the indigenous people who lived on the land and closest to nature. She grew up in Scotland, survived the Blitz in London, emigrated to Thunder Bay, and spent the last 20 years of her life either at her cabin on Loon Lake; summers in a remote reserve somewhere in Northern Ontario or Manitoba or Arctic community in Nunavut or The North West Territories or her writer's garret in the home she shared with her second husband in Hampshire, England. The 1963 Disney movie based on her classic novel *The Incredible Journey* made her briefly famous but her real accomplishments as a writer were yet to come. She was an observer of nature and people, who placed herself in her stories and wasn't afraid to laugh at and admit her mistakes. She was in her element with a shotgun and dog by her side to scare away the

bears. She was in many ways the ultimate amateur enthusiast who used observation and experiment to learn and write about any subject that caught her eye - from a feral cats to Paleolithic stone carvers. She had a strange appetite for learning indigenous languages and a taste for wild mushrooms, fish and even muktuk (*Inuit/Eskimo and Chukchi meal of frozen whale skin and blubber*). Her non-fiction is framed around a wonderful camaraderie among two women, a fearlessness and an energy. I want to capture that in this film by creating a series of 15 vignettes created using various styles from Sheila Burnford's many autobiographical stories published in her 6 books. This project is a celebration of one woman's journey from post-war Britain to Northern Canada. She not only embraced the rugged land she adopted as her home but also the indigenous people she encountered in the far northern reaches of Ontario and the Arctic.

Kelly Saxberg - Shebafilms

## BEE BOLES

These days, with bees and other pollinators in decline, many of us are taking action to support them by providing nectar and pollen rich plants and even by becoming beekeepers. Honey bees have always had high value, being kept for the honey and wax they produce. In the days before sugar was readily available, honey was widely used as a sweetener as well as for medicinal purposes. There was high demand from the wealthy and from pre-reformation churches for the long-burning, fragrant candles made from wax which bees produce. Such was its importance for light that tithes and rents were often paid in beeswax.

As nature's most efficient pollinators bees were often kept close to orchards and vegetable gardens and until wooden hives were invented bees were kept in skeps (beehives) handmade from straw. Most beekeepers kept their skeps in the open with sacking to provide protection from the elements. In some parts of Britain skeps were

placed in bee boles, specially constructed recesses in walls, that helped to preserve the skeps and the bees inside.



Bothwell Bee Boles

The few existing examples of bee boles are mostly to be found in eastern Scotland. There is a rare example here in Bothwell possibly dating from the eighteenth century. Set in a south-facing wall there are two pairs of boles, concave

at the rear. Each pair has the remains of a locking device, possibly for a wooden board to contain dry bracken or sacking to protect the skeps in winter, or to prevent theft.

Bee boles ceased to be used once wooden hives were introduced and those that survive are usually to be found in listed buildings. Nowadays they are sometimes used to hold plant containers. Some excellent examples can be seen at Brodick Castle and below, at Tolquhon Castle in Aberdeenshire.



Tolquhon Castle in Aberdeenshire

## SHARING THE BUZZ ABOUT BOTHWELL'S PAST

Thanks to members of the Historical Society a group of French Beekeepers recently had a wonderful introduction to Bothwell. The visitors were here from Jouy-en-Josas, our twin town in France, at the invitation of Bothwell's Beekeepers, who are part of the Community Garden.

The visitors were greeted in French by Jennifer Neil and Ross Wilson, pupils at Bothwell Primary School who then distributed French and Scottish flags together with St Andrew badges. A pamphlet describing the walk in English and French was also presented by the young people to the guests.

The guided walking tour they enjoyed on their first day here, set the scene and gave them a real sense of Bothwell's unique history. They saw remnants of its mining industry and heard the story of the Donald Institute and its founder's commitment to promoting learning. In the Parish Church they admired the ancient stone relics and glorious stained glass, as well as magnificent Toile de Jouy, gifted to Bothwell by their own townspeople as part of the original twinning celebrations. Following the tour everyone was treated to a delicious lunch at the Community Garden, courtesy of the Organic Growers of Bothwell, where Bothwell Beekeepers were presented with a hand crafted model of a French style beehive. Painted blue and decorated not only with the town emblems but also with a saltire. The frames inside were covered with samples of Jouy fabrics.

Everyone was most impressed by the depth of knowledge of their guides, George Maxwell, John Hart, Brian Sharp, Eric Denton and Jack Gallacher and their generous efforts, to the extent of providing historical information in French and English. Sincere thanks were expressed by Bothwell Beekeepers and their guests, *Les Apiculteurs de Jouy* for a very informative and entertaining meander around Bothwell.

Susan Fotheringham



## NEIL WILSON



*Dr Neil Wilson, great-great-grandson of Dr David Livingstone, with the Royal Mail commemorative stamp sheet at the David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre.*

Following his contact with our website, we were pleased to have a communication from Mr Neil Wilson, great-great grandson of Dr David Livingstone, Scotland's most famous missionary and explorer. The full text of Mr Wilson's message will be made available in our archive in the Library. The following is an edited extract.

*"My mother was born and brought up in Bothwell. Her father, James Mackie, was minister of Wooddean United Presbyterian Church (later United Free Church) from 1887 to 1926. She was born in 1895. I was saddened when I walked across the suspension bridge from Blantyre a couple of years ago to find not a trace of Wooddean church or manse which I remember seeing in my youth.*

James Mackie married the daughter of one of the elders, James Cuthbert who lived in Newton Lodge, Bothwell and at that time was Managing Partner of the Clyde Shipping

Company. James Mackie was the son of Robert Mackie of Stewarton, a successful bonnet manufacturer in that town. After they retired in 1926, my grandparents moved to Biggar. Their three children had modest claims to "fame". The eldest, Janette married Dr Ernest Thom, a provost of the town. When he died, she became a councillor and later also Provost. She was much involved in the restoration of New Lanark in the seventies.

*"My mother, Mary Rhoda Mackie married Dr Hubert Wilson, the grandson of Blantyre's David Livingstone. My parents served as Missionaries for a number of years in Chitambo, near where Livingstone died in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and then lived in Carnoustie where I was born and brought up."*

The youngest sibling, Robert Cuthbert Mackie followed his father into the ministry but not as a parish. His interest was firstly in the Student Christian Movement and later the World Student Christian Federation of which he was General Secretary for many years. He was involved in the setting up of the World Council of Churches after the Second World War and was appointed Associate General Secretary with responsibility for Inter-Church Aid. He married the daughter of a United Presbyterian minister.

Mr Neil Wilson now lives in Kendal and is a member of Kendal Civic Society. He commented, "It would have been good if the former Wooddean Church had been communicated in some way." Perhaps that point could be considered by Bothwell Historical Society. We are grateful to Mr Mackie for a fascinating insight into the story of his distinguished family.