
NEWSLETTER



In conversation recently with one of our members, I was gratified to hear her speak in glowing terms about the work of the society. It's always encouraging to hear feedback from members and we are not averse to critical comment if that is appropriate.

Our most recent major project was the survey of monuments in the parish church kirkyard and within the church itself. It was my privilege on April 27th to present a specially bound copy of the completed project to the Rev Jim Gibson. This has been a major piece of historical research which is of great significance not only locally but nationally too. All credit is due to Bill Gow and his dedicated team of researchers for their efforts to record the monuments of the church and its churchyard as they are in 2017. It will be a valuable resource for future generations. While content is critical, appearance and presentation are also important and our thanks to Liz Denton for her work in this area.

Tourism is of huge importance to the Scottish economy and our history and heritage bring many visitors to our country. Few communities in the land can outdo Bothwell in terms of history and heritage. We must then do all in our power to preserve and cherish what we have in the face of

unacceptable developments. One thing that has changed with the road works at the Raith is that Bothwell and Bothwell Castle are now clearly signed and hopefully this will attract tourists off the road to use the resources and facilities of the village. A thriving village centre is important for all of us. We also need to encourage Historical Environmental Scotland to update directions to the castle in their members' handbook. More people need to see what our community has to offer.

Your help is vital in developing our Heritage Corner in the Donald Institute. If you are downsizing or clearing out your attic or if there is anything you have of local interest, please let us know. We are very grateful to those of you have already responded to our pleas. The library staff will be happy to pass on materials to us which you may hand in. Please also try to contribute to the large screen in the Library

Thank you, all our members and friends for your support in recent times. My thanks too to Alastair McNeill of the "Hamilton Advertiser" for his help in promoting the society's work in our local paper.

As always your hard working committee members and office bearers are to be commended for their loyalty and dedication to Bothwell Historical Society. I look forward to seeing you again at our meetings.

Jack Gallacher

VIDEO SCREEN IN THE LIBRARY

It has now been almost a year since the society purchased the screen and developed the programme of photos and information pages on display. The screen has been well admired and has raised many points of interest. Comments from readers and visitors to the library indicate that the effort and expenditure has been well worthwhile.

For example Brighter Bothwell has used the system to show the results of a weekend clean up of the

village and their Easter Bunny Hunt. We have scenes from the Community Garden, the Bothwell Beekeepers, some photos from several years ago with side by side photos taken years later and a selection of old postcards of Bothwell.

We always welcome interesting photos, information etc that would be suitable for display on the system.

EDGCUMBE PEEBLES

Following the article in the last Newsletter about the Metrohm box made by Edgcumbe Peebles, local resident Len Shaw contacted the Society to explain that the box was a specialised insulation tester used to check the integrity of insulation on electric motors and large transformers.

Len Shaw became Sales Director of Edgcumbe Peebles and was able to give the following history of the company.

I joined Edgcumbe Peebles (latterly Edgcumbe Instruments) in the mid 1960's as a young electrical engineer providing technical support to the sales department.

The Belmos (derived from Bellshill/Mossend) company owned by the Coughtrie family of Bothwell had purchased Everett Edgcumbe, an old established electrical instrument manufacturer based in London, some years earlier and after buying the old railway station in Main Street Bothwell, facing what was then the Griffin Hotel, moved manufacturing to that site. This was a very challenging operation as only 3 employees out of over 600 moved from London to Bothwell. The product range was streamlined from around 800 to a more manageable 50 under the stewardship of Dr. Ian

McGregor who was appointed Managing Director. Many locals will remember Ian and his wife the former Ann Wilson.

On a historical note the famous physicist and Electrical Engineer, Lord Kelvin, Professor of Physics at Glasgow University, was a Director of Everett Edgcumbe in the early 1900's and contributed to the design of a number of specialised measuring instruments.

Bothwell, Uddingston and surrounding areas benefited from 250 jobs in light engineering/electronic assembly, laboratory, engineering and administration.

The Belmos Company manufactured electrical switchgear in Blantyre, Bellshill and Mossend and had merged with Bruce Peebles of Edinburgh, who had 3000 employees manufacturing electrical motors, generators and transformers some years earlier becoming the largest electrical engineering company in Scotland.

Edgcumbe was the only U.K. manufacturer of a range of intrinsically safe (for use in hazardous areas) insulation testers which complemented the mining/flameproof switchgear made by Belmos for customers such as the National Coal Board.



Len Shaw

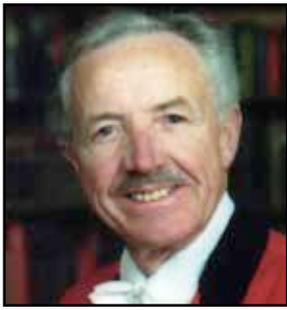
Along came The Industrial Reorganisation Corporation which was an entity established by the Harold Wilson government in 1966 to encourage mergers to enable British Industry to become more competitive. One of the largest groups so established was Northern Engineering Industries (NEI) which was comprised of the Scottish based companies of Belmos, Bruce Peebles, Edgcumbe plus A. Reyrolle, Clarke Chapman and Parsons Turbines all of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, followed by International Combustion, Sir William Arrol and others. The group had around 35,000

employees with Sir Duncan McDonald of Bruce Peebles moving to Tyneside to become Chairman as did George Coughtrie of Belmos who became Vice-Chairman.

Only remnants of the 3 Scottish Companies now exist with N.E.I. being taken over by Rolls-Royce in 1989 and subsequently many constituent parts sold-off or closed down.

Thus for a brief period in its long history Bothwell was home to a manufacturer of Electrical Measuring Instruments.

SANDY SINCLAIR - A LIFE IN GOLF



Bothwell Castle Golf Club has been an important part of Bothwell life since its inception in 1923 and one of its most distinguished members was Sandy Sinclair. Born in Ayrshire he showed a natural talent for golf on the classic links course of

West Kilbride where he became a junior member at the age of ten. At the end of his golfing career he was a keen member of the Seniors' Section in Bothwell.

In the years in between he competed with enthusiasm at the highest level of amateur golf. As an amateur he played in four Opens; two at Troon and two at the Old Course at St Andrews. In 1966 he became Captain of the Scottish Team at the Home Internationals and a year later was Captain at the European Team Championship in Turin. Later he was to become President of the European Golf Association and Chairman of the selectors for the Walker Cup. In 1969 he became Chairman of the Royal and Ancient Selection Committee.

In 1988 he was elected to the most prestigious post in golf - Captain of the Royal and Ancient. The Captain of the R&A is chosen at a special meeting of Past Captains. In his book "I WAS THERE" he recounts

the moment when the new Captain drives off the first tee to mark his year in office, an anxious moment compounded at St Andrews by the fact that "at the precise moment of hitting the ball, the cannon on the first tee is fired with a thunderous bang". Sandy was a small man but with a big drive and an impish wit. During his year and often with his wife Betty at his side he travelled the world as an ambassador for the game to which he had contributed so much.

Life was not all golf. Sandy was in the insurance business but both business and his golfing career were interrupted by The Second World War. He served in the army during the war. In his own words he was "out in forty back in forty six." After he was demobbed he resumed his career as an insurance broker. His work with Norwich Union brought him to Lanarkshire where he met his wife Betty. Sandy played at Drumpelier Golf Club, then in 1961 Sandy, Betty and their three children moved to Bothwell. Sandy became a member at Bothwell Castle Golf Club and Betty decided to take up the game as well.

After he retired he decided he would like to write about his life which had taken him from a hill farm in Ayrshire to the most prestigious golf courses in the world. Sandy was a very amusing man. His book, "I WAS THERE" is full of anecdotes and wry observations of the great and the good and not so good in the world of golf.

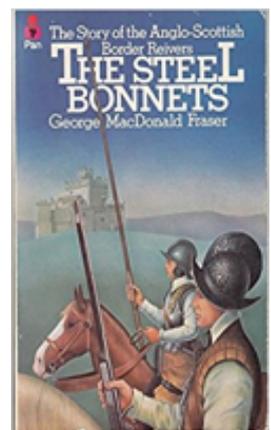
OUR JUNIOR HISTORIAN



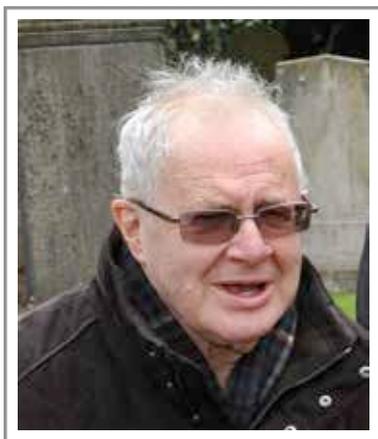
This is my second article for the Historical Society. I am writing about my first meeting as a member. The meeting was about the border reivers and it was presented by John Hart, an extremely interesting speaker. He discussed the border reivers, a group of people who came from the border of Scotland and England and who would cross the border to rob and steal for food. I also learned about the 100 year blood feud between the families of Maxwell and Johnstone. Mr Hart made it sound so interesting that I came home and researched more and I found out that the Johnstones also had a feud. The Moffat family was destroyed by the Johnstones when they burned down a church with a lot of Moffats inside, then they claimed the Moffats land to clear their debt.

There were also many castles on the border such as Caerlaverlock Castle which was the seat of the Maxwells and Lochmaben Castle which was the Johnstones seat. Thank you to the society for letting me write another article.

Nathan Lafferty



THE BORDER REIVERS



John Hart was the speaker at the Society's March meeting. He opened his talk on the Border Reivers by describing their houses - simple cottages for the peasant farmers, bastle houses for those further up the social ladder

and tower houses, also known as peel towers, for the lairds. He then went on to describe the weapons and body protection used by the reivers.

The reivers were notorious for stealing cattle but there was a system which gave the right of pursuit and to retrieve the stolen animals. This was known as "*Hot Trod*" and could lawfully be made within six days of the theft. After six days it was known as a "*Cold Trod*". The man leading a Hot Trod was supposed to impale a burning peat on his lance to indicate that his intentions were peaceful. He was also supposed to announce "*Trod*" to the first person he met or at the first village.

To try to control the lawless borderlands, the area was divided up into 6 regions, known as Marches. Three were in Scotland and three in England, each under the control of an official known as a Warden. It was the duty of the Warden to arrange a day of truce with his opposite number in the Wardenry opposite. This was to take place once a month and its purpose was to settle crimes committed by persons in the other country.

However raiding still prevailed and on one occasion in 1596, Henry Leigh, Deputy Warden of the English West March led a small Trod into Scotland in pursuit of some reivers. He was joined by ten members of the Graham family and a bloodhound. They caught up with the raiders who included two members of the

Irvine family, nicknamed, for some curious reason "*the Kangs*". The Grahams stood back while the Kangs cut down the Warden officer, stole his horse and dog and made off with the loot.

The Wardens of the Marches were not always models of rectitude. Notable in this category was Robert Kerr of Cessford who acted as his father's Deputy Warden in the Scottish Middle March. He had an evil reputation for protecting reivers in his Wardenry and allowing them to use it as a base for their depredations. In 1595 he took 8 riders to Wooler in Northumberland in pursuit of a feud which resulted in the death of 3 men. The following year he was again raiding in the North of England, murdering, thieving and feuding with the Turnbull family. With 16 killings to his credit it was little wonder he was known to the English as "The Great Bloodsucker".

The new Warden of the English East March, Robert Carey, sent a messenger with a letter addressed to Robert Kerr, suggesting a meeting to discuss matters of common concern. Kerr received the messenger cordially, plied him liberally with food and drink and while he was sleeping it off, slipped out of the castle and across the Border where he murdered an Englishman with whom he had a quarrel and then slipped back again before anyone discovered his absence. In the morning he dispatched the messenger back to Carey with what was described as a "kind" letter. This was well received until the news of the murder came in! Relations between the two men deteriorated further and in 1596 Carey captured a reiver called Geordie Burn. Burn was an out and out thug who, by his own admission had been guilty of at least 7 murders, many acts of theft and that he had "lain with 40 other men's wives". He was sentenced to be hanged.

When he heard this Robert Kerr of Cessford was incandescent with rage. He declared that Burns was "near and dear" to him and that he was "full of grief and disdain" and he swore a "cruel revenge". He crossed the Border with 100 riders and sent off parties

to steal cattle in the hope of provoking a “Hot Trod” which he could ambush. The English anticipated the trap, so Kerr sent the cattle back saying that it wasn't cattle he wanted “but blood”.

With men like Robert Kerr of Cessford it is not difficult to understand why the borders were in such a disturbed state.

John Hart then went on to talk about the longest and bloodiest feud in British history lasting over 85 years. It was between the Border families of the Maxwells and the Johnstones. In 1580 a warrant was issued for the arrest of John, 8th Lord Maxwell. John Johnstone, Warden of the West March sent a force to effect the arrest but it was ambushed and cut to pieces by a force led by Robert Maxwell, John Maxwell's half brother. Robert then proceeded to attack the chief Johnstone stronghold of Lochwood Tower with a force of 400 men, sacked and burned it, killing six Johnstones and taking 12 prisoners. But the Johnstones struck back, partially burning a Maxwell village, in return for which the Maxwells attacked the town of Lockerbie and hung 4 Johnstones above their own doors.

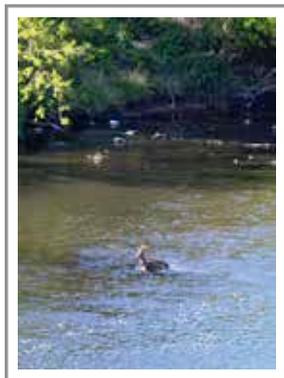
In May 1585, Maxwell took a force of 1,700 men and scoured the whole district around Moffat and ran off with over 300 horses and more than 3,000 head of cattle. By August 1585 the struggle for control of the West March was clearly going against the Johnstones. Johnstone himself was captured and Maxwell erected a large gallows in Dumfries and threatened to hang the Johnston Chief and other prisoners unless Lochmaben was surrendered to him. He also demanded the surrender of the entire Johnstone surname, both of which he got. The Maxwell Chief was then the undisputed master of the West Riding but by the following year he was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle partly because of his Catholicism but also possibly because of what was considered suspicious correspondence he had with Spain. The Johnstone Chief meanwhile had been released from captivity and resumed his attacks on Maxwell's lands.

He intercepted a raid by about 100 Maxwells, most of whom he captured.

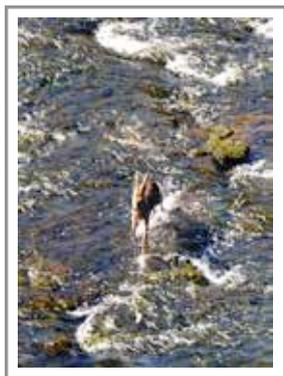
The feud between the families continued with a vast succession of raids, burnings and hangings. By 1593 Maxwell determined to settle with his troublesome rival family for good. He raised a force of some 2,000 men and issued an offer of £10 worth of land for the Johnstone chief's head or right hand. James Johnstone, being rather less wealthy, could only muster an offer of £5 for his enemy's extremities. Johnstone gathered together a mixed band of his own Johnstones, along with Elliots, Scotts, Irvines and Grahams totalling something over 400 men. Johnstone's forces were all mounted on border ponies while the Maxwell army was a mixed force of riders and foot soldiers. Johnstone concealed his forces among the trees along the Dryfe Water, near Lockerbie. When Maxwell's army came into view he sent men forward to hurl insults in an effort to goad them into making an ill-considered attack. It worked. Confident of their superior numbers the Maxwell forces advanced into the Johnstone ambush. After a brief but vicious skirmish, the Maxwells were driven back into the ranks of their own footmen who quickly turned to flee. The Johnstones followed, hacking and slashing, all the way into the town of Lockerbie. By nightfall on that day - 6th December 1593 - some 700 Maxwells and their supporters lay dead, either on the road to Lockerbie or on its streets. The Maxwell chief lost his life in the Battle of Dryfe Sands and their power was never the same again.

The feud between the two families spluttered on for another 5 years when a determined effort was made to end it. Sir James Johnstone, head of the family and John, 9th Lord Maxwell agreed to settle outstanding differences at a meeting at Tynwald, but Maxwell just could not restrain himself. He shot Johnstone twice in the back and had to flee to France where he stayed for the next 4 years. He was incautious enough to be enticed back to Scotland where he was betrayed to the authorities. He was beheaded at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh on 20th May 1613 by the Maiden. The Maxwell - Johnstone feud was finally over.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF NATURE



It has been a long time since Bothwell was a rural village on the banks of a crystal clear river, surrounded by farms and dominated by a great mansion and its pristine gardens and estate. Now more of a dormitory town and suburban area, the forms of nature which would have prevailed all those years ago may still be seen locally in Bothwell by the keen observer.



Urban foxes roam our streets and gardens and their eerie cries can be heard in the darkness of the night, the ubiquitous grey squirrel forages out and about, the herons fish

in the waters of the Clyde happily now much cleaner than in the days of heavy industry and once again home to salmon and other fish. Lucky observers have also been known to encounter the odd secretive badger out hunting. Hives of bees pollinate plants and manufacture honey in secret hives in village locations. A variety of smaller animals and a multitude of birds share the village with us.

Probably most surprising of all is the fact that small, timid deer are now to be found in the woodlands along the Clyde, on the Nature Trail, the golf course and frequently in our gardens. Recently an American visitor, Lois Harter from Pollock Pines in California, walking around Bothwell using Ann Waterston's delightful "*Walks around Bothwell*" took pictures of a deer swimming in the River Clyde just below Bothwell Bridge. We hope that Lois enjoyed her visit to Bothwell and we are grateful to her for sharing her photographs with us

BOTHWELL KIRKYARD SURVEY

The survey of the gravestones in Bothwell Kirkyard was completed earlier this year. The first meeting of volunteers was held in July last year and it is to their credit that their work was completed by January this year. Photographs of all the stones, their inscriptions and, where available, the biographical details of the people named on the stones were then collated and published. The resulting book runs to 381 pages and lists the 548 gravestones with the 1260 names.

A special hardbound copy of the book was presented to the Reverend Jim Gibson at a ceremony on the 27 April 2017. Reverend Gibson expressed his gratitude and commented: "Members of the Bothwell Historical Society have done a fantastic job of researching the headstones of the churchyard. The Kirk Session of the Parish Church is very much indebted to them both for their work and, also for publishing their results in a superb bound volume which has been gifted to the Church. Though the book will be kept within the Church archive, the

information it contains will be a tremendous help to those who regularly contact us for ancestry enquiries. We very much look forward to working in partnership with the Society in the future to the benefit of folks within our community and beyond."



Courtesy of the Hamilton Advertiser

LOCAL HERO

Local resident Elizabeth Ann Stewart recently contacted the Society with some old family papers and photographs relating to Bothwell.

Her husband's mother was Alice Aitchman and her father ran the family firm of A&T Aitchman, Painters and Decorators. Their premises were at 23 Hamilton Road, Bothwell, now occupied by Brown Gunmakers. The family lived at 16 Green Street, Bothwell but later moved to 9 Langside Road.

Alice's brother, William Aitchman was born in 1896 and attended Bothwell Primary School. His Certificate of Merit from the school, dated 23 September 1912, showed the subjects he studied were English, arithmetic, geography, history, chemistry and also included the laws of health, nature study, common commercial documents and drawing. He then went to classes at Hamilton Technical School where he gained certificates in painting, decorating, sign writing and graining. On completion of his studies in 1916 William enlisted with the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots to fight in the Great War. He was taken prisoner and sent to a POW camp in Germany. The family received news of his release when the Bothwell postmistress ran along Green Street clutching a telegram and shouting "Willie's alive, Willie's alive". On his return to Bothwell,

William Aitchman received the following letter from King George V dated 1918, Buckingham Palace.

"The Queen joins me in welcoming you on your release from the miseries & hardships, which you have endured with so much patience & courage. During these many months of trial, the early rescue of our gallant Officers & Men from the cruelties of their captivity has been uppermost in our thoughts. We are thankful that this longed for day has arrived, & that back in the old Country you will be able once more to enjoy the happiness of a home & to see good days among those who anxiously look for your return. George VI"

This handwritten letter from the King was treasured by the family until, by the wonder of a Google search, it was revealed that the letter was lithographed and sent to all returning POWs. Many other families expressed their disappointment when they discovered their treasure heirloom was, in fact a copy.

It is considered that this letter was the first mass communication from a British monarch.

The copy of the letter from the King along with William Aitchman's education certificates, army papers and identity card have been placed in the Society's archives.

