
NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The



Every day of every week of every month of every year is an anniversary of some historic significance. So far in 2018, we have been celebrating the act of parliament which gave certain women the vote and began a process of female emancipation which is still continuing today. In

April this year we will be remembering the centenary of the founding of the Royal Air Force when the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service were merged. In November we will recognise the significance of the end of World War 1.

In Bothwell Historical Society we will recall not only the great national events but also significant elements in our local history. Our modest Heritage Corner in the Library continues to be developed with our new cabinet display of local artefacts together with the ever popular large screen. We have requested a loan of pottery from the excavations at Bothwell Castle from

National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. We keep hoping for donations of items of local interest from you our members to add to the collection.

Bill Gow is currently negotiating with contractors for the restoration of the wall, railings and gates at the Dixon entrance to the parish church. This will be a joint project between the Historical Society and the Parish Church.

Our Speakers' programme for 2018/19 is nearly complete and will include a talk by our Honorary President, Sir Tom Devine. Attendances at meetings this session have been very encouraging and we anticipate continuing support from members and friends.

As always I am grateful for the support of the committee members, Liz and Eric Denton and Bill Gow. Above all the Society will continue to flourish only as long as we have the support of our members. I look forward to working with all of you to progress the success of Bothwell Historical Society.

Jack Gallacher

DIXON GATE



The Historical Society, in conjunction with the Parish Church, is arranging for the renovation of the wall, railings and gate at the entrance to the Church

graveyard known as Dixon's Gate. Funding for the majority of the work has been received from Paterson Quarries Ltd through the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund as administered by the Land Trust. The Church will fund the balance of the cost of the work.

The work on the wall will be undertaken by a stonemason while the refurbishment of the railings and gate will be carried out by a blacksmith.

It would appear that the original 'Dixon' railings were removed to support the war effort and the present ones were installed post war. They will be taken away by the blacksmith for refurbishment.

The removal of the railings will allow the stonemason to rebed the loose stones and to repoint the wall with lime mortar. In the past the coping stones were patched with a granolithic mortar to cover the post holes of the original railings. This will be removed, the loose coping stones rebbed and the copes made good with a colour matched mortar. The wall will then be cleaned to remove the moss and dirt.

It is anticipated that this work will start towards the end of April and will be completed within a month.

MY EXPERIENCE MEETING SIR TOM WAS SIMPLY DEVINE

It was the 24th of October and I was so excited as I was meeting the president of the historical society and Scotland's leading historian Sir Tom Devine. I told everyone I could and they all shared my excitement with me, I also couldn't believe that not only was I going to meet the great man but I was also fortunate enough to be presented with a signed book by him.

On the evening Sir Tom was talking about Scottish involvement in the Chinese opium trade. William Jardine and James Mathieson were both prime examples of Scots who fed the bottomless hole that was China. Products such as silk and tea were sought after by the British people, however these were scarce within British colonies, China on the other had these in plentiful supply. Try as they could the British were



unable to seal deals for silk and tea from China, this did change however with intervention from Jardine and Mathieson and many others who agreed deals to sell poppy seeds and opium to China. Jardine Mathieson to this day is still a company with a net worth of \$47.6 billion and its headquarters are in Hong Kong, China.

I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting with Sir Tom and his lecture sparked my interest in the history of the Chinese Opium trade. As always at the Bothwell Historical Society meetings I enjoyed meeting many interesting people such as Mr Denton the photographer who sent my photo to the Hamilton Advertiser and Mr Martin my Father's old science teacher and in every article I will ever do I will always thank Mr Gallacher as he makes me feel so welcome.

FACT OR FICTION?

A few hundred yards upstream from Bothwell Castle on the north side of the river the following has been carved into a rock face approximately 12 feet above average level of the river

"The Clyde rose to this mark 12th March 1789"

Could rainfall or snow-melt result in the Clyde rising about 12 feet? Surely, if it could the flooding elsewhere must have been extraordinary and would have been noted?

During the 18th century period, a mini ice age was taking place and the weather was significantly colder and wetter than now! It was recorded in the Scots Magazine that "In March 1782 the Clyde rose, in Glasgow, to a greater height than the oldest people in the city remember. It has sometimes over-flowed that part of the town which lies very low; but upon this occasion, it rose about twenty feet of perpendicular height above the usual course of the river. This remarkable inundation was occasioned by a very heavy fall of rain and snow"

An expert with Scottish Natural Heritage said that in relative terms the river gully at Bothwell Castle is quite

narrow and deep so an occasional extremely high flood mark is not out of the question.

To prove this opinion, on the 24th January 2018, the Clyde rose to slightly above this height after many days of rain and snow.

Nicol Rennie



AT LAST! WOMEN GET THE VOTE

Victory for the suffragettes



One hundred years ago, on the 6th of February 1918, the Representation of the People Act became law. It gave all men over the age of 21 and certain women over the age of 30 the vote. Previously 40% of men did not have the vote and it was recognised that serving soldiers had earned the right to vote. The Act came about for women, not only as a result of a long campaign to secure women's suffrage by the suffragette movement, but also because of the vital role

women played in the First World War. The Government felt it should be rewarded for this. When war started in 1914 suffragettes stopped their militant actions and focussed their efforts on helping to win the war. Women worked in many areas such as munitions factories, engineering works, firefighting, manning buses and nursing. The Women's Land Army was formed where women worked on farms helping to provide food for the nation.

Although this was a great step forward for women's suffrage, women could only vote if they were over 30 and were householders, the wives of householders, occupiers of property with an annual rent of £5 or graduates of British universities. The official reason given for women having to wait nine years longer than men to vote was that it was thought women were too immature to vote at a younger age! The real reason was, if women were able to vote at the same age as men, then women would have outnumbered male voters in the electorate. In 1918 this would have been regarded as preposterous; such was the attitude towards women and their role in society.

Women had been asking for the vote for decades. The movement had split into the suffragists, who wanted to campaign peacefully and the suffragettes who famously deployed '*deeds not words*' to secure the vote. Suffragettes endured many hardships during their campaign for women's right to vote. From 1900 to the beginning of the First World War approximately 1000 were imprisoned. Imprisoned suffragettes went on hunger strike for their cause. Many of them were

brutally force fed and treated badly. One of the most famous and tragic suffragettes was Emily Wilding Davidson. She was force fed 49 times after being imprisoned for her militant actions. In 1913 she stepped out in front of the King's horse at the Epsom Derby and was killed. In one month alone, at the height of suffragette violence, there were 52 violent attacks, including 29 bombings and 15 arson attempts on various buildings and even some MPs' homes. The suffragettes always observed the strict orders of the Women's Social and Political Movement leadership (founded and led by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst) never to endanger human life. They did not kill or harm anyone.

The Suffragette movement in Scotland

Scottish women played an influential role in the suffragette movement and this is often forgotten as it is the events in London that are remembered. Edinburgh had one of the earliest suffrage societies in the 1870s.

With the Prime Minister of the time, Herbert Asquith, having his constituency in Fife and Winston Churchill an MP for Dundee, there were plenty of opportunities for the establishment to be challenged. At every by-election at which the Liberal Party stood there was campaigning for votes for women. When Churchill came to stand for Dundee in 1908 he was followed by 27 of the national leaders of the women's suffrage movement. At one point he had to hide in a shed in order to hold a meeting!

Up until 1903 non militant methods such as petitions, letter writing and badgering Members of Parliament had been used in Scotland. With the establishment of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, that changed! In 1906 a branch was opened in Glasgow and in 1908 the Scottish headquarters was opened in the city. At first, Scottish suffragettes went down to England to be involved in some militant acts, but a few years before the beginning of the First World War, militant acts took place in Scotland. Many buildings were burned down including the grandstands at Ayr and Perth racecourses. Acid was poured into post boxes to destroy mail. Francis Parker tried to blow up Burns' Cottage in Alloway. The Scottish militant suffragettes were careful not to harm people and the places they set fire to were always empty. Their idea was to try and get landowners and insurance companies to persuade the government to give them the

vote. Women were also imprisoned in Scotland and many who decided to go on hunger strike were subjected to force feeding at both Perth and Edinburgh prisons. By 1914 there were about 100 militant suffragettes in Scotland but many other women believed in the cause and used other means to further it.

The Legacy post February 1918

The campaign for equality continued and in November 1918 the Parliament (Qualifications of Women) Act was passed which allowed women to stand as candidates for Parliament. It was not until 1928, ten years later, with the passage of the Equal Franchise Act that women attained the same voting rights as men. The women's movement continued to campaign for equal pay for equal work (still not fully achieved), reform of the divorce laws and widows pensions, equal rights of guardianship for children and access of women to the legal profession.

Although from November 1918, women could stand for Parliament, they did not achieve the same levels of representation as men. Nancy Astor was the first female member to sit in Parliament and won her seat

in the November 1919 election. She experienced much hostility and men she had known for years refused to speak to her if she passed them in the corridors of the House of Commons! Winston Churchill said of the arrival of Nancy Astor to Parliament, *'I find a woman's intrusion into the House of Commons as embarrassing as if she burst into my bathroom when I had nothing with which to defend myself, not even a sponge'*. Such was the antipathy towards women members amongst the establishment at the time!

By the 1945 General Election 24 female MPs were elected to Parliament. It was not until 1987 that women represented 5% of the Commons and the first black woman, Diane Abbott, was elected. By general election in 2017 this number had risen to 208 which represented fewer than 1 in 3 MPs! The fact that men still outnumber women in Parliament and in many top jobs reflects the slow evolution of women's progress in gaining equality and having the same opportunities as men. Of course there are many reasons for this. Nevertheless progress has been made in the last 100 years. The suffragette movement gave women's right to equality and opportunity a momentous boost and they deserve to be remembered for all their efforts and suffering for the cause.

THE HERITAGE COLLECTION

The Donald Institute, which houses our excellent village library, is a vital part of the community life of Bothwell.

The Historical Society is currently organising a display of items there which we think will be of interest to local people and to visitors and we are locating it appropriately in one of our most historical buildings.

At present the Historical Collection is a modest gathering of portraits, prints and photographs together with mining, railway and industrial memorabilia. In pride of place is the beautiful bowling club trophy of 1889 repatriated from the USA in 2015

One of the smaller items will resonate with many ladies in Bothwell. It is a badge from the long gone but never to be forgotten Elmwood School. Memorabilia doesn't have to be grand. Small items from the past can also generate interest.

A pamphlet describing the items in the collection will be available from the Library staff. We would ask you, our members, to consider donating items you may have to the collection so that we may have a wider appreciation of the lives of those who have gone before us and hand on our heritage to those who come after us.



Bowling Club Trophy 1889

A BOTHWELL CASTLE COLLIERY RELIC

If you look first at the date at the bottom of the explosives notice in the Bothwell Historical Society archive room, it reads '1875'. That was the year that William Baird, the Coatbridge iron master, opened the Bothwell Castle Colliery.

Look next at the name at the top of the notice: 'Nobel's Explosives Co Ltd'. That was the owner of the building (magazine) where this notice was posted. The magazine was used by the company to store large amounts of explosive. It was made with thick, strong outside walls and a comparatively weak roof. The weak roof was to guide the violence from an accidental explosion in a safe direction.

Lastly, but most important, the Nobel Explosives Co had to build the magazine in a safe place well away from the colliery and the public. The remains of the magazine still stand near the Castle Avenue.

In 1875, the most commonly used explosive to bring down coal was gunpowder. It was a black mixture consisting of carbon (charcoal), ammonium nitrate (saltpetre) and sulphur. It was easily manufactured, of comparatively low strength (suitable for breaking up the solid coal seam into lumps), but highly inflammable (therefore dangerous). The powder was sold openly to the public in brown paper bags usually from ironmongers shops. The Hamilton Palace Colliery at Bothellhaugh was the first local colliery to sell gunpowder to the miners instead of them bringing it from home.

The capability of gunpowder when fired (ignited) in a borehole in the coal seam to produce a flame hot enough to cause methane (firedamp) in the air of the workings to explode was always recognised as a danger. To prevent such an occurrence, men trained to detect firedamp (firemen) inspected the workings every shift to make sure it was safe to fire gunpowder. As the practice was open to mistakes, gradually explosives were manufactured to reduce the chance of flame. These new explosives became known as Permitted Explosives.

Permitted Explosives were nitro-glycerine based, of plastic constituency, sold in waxed paper tubes containing 8 oz of explosives, and if handled roughly they would not explode. They could only be fired by the violence created by electric detonators.

A miner, who was paid extra for carrying explosives underground, queued up at the beginning of his shift to be issued with explosives from the colliery store, which was a small volume transit point between the magazine and underground. He would carry the explosives in a metal canister holding up to 5 lb. Electric detonators, which were very dangerous, if mishandled, were carried underground by a shotfirer (a miner trained to detonate explosives safely) in a special box lined with cloth and divided into slots each containing one detonator.



BURIED AT BOTHWELL

As many people know, Bothwell Parish Church was erected by Archibald Third Earl of Douglas, nicknamed Archibald "The Grim", into a Collegiate Church in 1398. What is less well known is that he directed that, at his death, he be interred there.

He died at Threave Castle, near Castle Douglas, on December 24th 1400. We are not given precise details about what happened next, but according to normal practice at that date, his body would have been embalmed (which meant the internal organs would have been removed and buried elsewhere), and then enclosed in a lead coffin for the journey North to Bothwell, which at that date, might take anything up to two weeks, depending upon the weather conditions and the state of what passed for roads at that time.

We do not know exactly when his burial took place but the most likely time would have been early in January 1401. Here however, the trail goes cold, because the chroniclers give us no further information. We are given no clue as to the location of the tomb within the church, nor, as far as I am aware, has any trace of it ever been discovered.

Given the importance of Archibald "the Grim", by the time of his death the most powerful and important magnate south of the Forth and Clyde, this might seem very strange, so what possibly might have been the reason for this apparent secrecy, and where might he actually be buried? Assuming that the chroniclers are speaking the truth and he actually was buried at Bothwell.

Normally speaking, the most likely location for the tomb of the founder of a Collegiate Church would have been somewhere in the vicinity of the High Altar. The location of the High Altar at Bothwell can be traced to the East end of the Chancel, confirmed by the existence of a piscina at the Southeast corner of the Chancel. A piscina is a stone basin near the altar in pre-Reformation churches for draining water used in the Mass, An altar was always located to the left of a piscina.

Interestingly enough however, there was at least one more altar in the Collegiate Church at Bothwell. It was located in what was the Sacristy of the Church and is now the Minister's vestry. How do we know? Inside the old Sacristy, tucked away on the wall behind the wardrobe in which vestments etc are kept, is another piscina.

This means that there once was an altar to the left of the piscina, probably just below the small window on that wall and likely to be a removable altar.

This means of course, that Masses must sometimes have been celebrated inside the Old Sacristy. One of the reasons for this might have been that they were Votive Masses for the Dead, who might have included Archibald "the Grim" and his family which in turn suggests that he *may* have been buried somewhere close by.

Why the apparent secrecy? We just do not know for certain, but we get what may be a clue from the date of Archibald "The Grim's" death, ie. the year 1400.

This was right mid-way through the "Great Schism" ie. the period from 1378-1417 when the Roman Catholic world was split in two, with two Popes, both of whom claimed to rule the Church, Boniface IX (the "official" Pope, ruling from Rome, and recognised by most of Europe including England, the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish Kingdoms and Portugal, and most of the States of Italy except the Kingdom of Naples; and the Antipope, Benedict XIII, ruling from Avignon, and recognised by France, Scotland, Burgundy, Savoy and Naples).

Each of the Popes declared the other, and his supporters, to be "schismatic" ie. not as bad as heretics, but not quite good and faithful sons and daughters of the Church.

Since Scotland and England each supported different Popes, each would regard the other as "schismatic", and where two countries which regarded each other as schismatic were at war, it was a fairly common practice at the time to ransack the churches, break open any tombs, and scatter the bones contained in them.

Is it possible, therefore, that the apparent secrecy of Archibald "the Grim's" burial was actually a kind of "insurance policy" to prevent his last resting place from being despoiled?



Seal of Archibald of Douglas
(the Grim) 1373

WELCOME TO BOTHWELL AIRPORT! (NOT QUITE SO DAFT AS IT SOUNDS!)



In the 1930s there was a proposal that an airfield could be built on grounds near Bothwell Castle. In the 1920s and 1930s, carrying passengers by aircraft was in its infancy. The town councils of Motherwell and Hamilton had jointly asked Sir Alan Cobham to prepare a report on the feasibility of building an airfield or aerodrome to serve both burghs as close to both main towns as possible.

Sir Alan Cobham was an aviator with many hours flying experience and indeed had several companies associated with the aircraft of the time. He had also patented several items for the aircraft construction industry; the most notable item of which was equipment for mid-air refuelling of aircraft, later to be an essential item for military aircraft. Sir Alan quite rightly predicted that aviation would play a major role in passenger and freight transport in years to come although he was wrong in his suggestion that there would be an aerodrome in or near every town. His predictions for the future of air passenger transport using local airfields would be the use of "air taxis" to convey business and tourist passengers quickly to their destinations. The proximity of an existing good road system close to the airfield was essential to speed passengers to their ultimate destinations. There would be little advantage over road or rail travel if the aircraft could cover a journey of say 100 miles in an hour or so only to be delayed by much slower road travel at either end of the journey.

The report he produced stated that there was not a suitable site in either Motherwell & Wishaw Burgh or even in Hamilton Burgh, but he had identified one in Bothwell Castle Polices. He predicted that close to every aerodrome there would probably be an aircraft factory or maintenance facility providing work for local people. He also thought that the local authority could take advantage of the land at the airfield by building and renting out premises for commercial use. Around the same time, Glasgow Corporation had also been thinking along similar lines of building an aerodrome for the city. They had seen Sir Alan's report and concluded that the city would be better served should an aerodrome be built, it should be nearer to the city, under the control of

Glasgow Corporation, but not in Bothwell under the control of the local burgh councils. Sir Alan's report suggested that as more and more people were learning to fly and had their own aircraft, that flying clubs would be on the increase and looking for suitable locations for club meetings, flying displays and suitable storage for their machines.

The "air taxis" he envisaged were small machines carrying only 6 or 10 passengers, not the larger machines being developed by the many new companies being established in a rapidly expanding business. In the 1930s passenger numbers soared from only a few thousand each year to well over a million. The "air taxis" allowed passengers to take luggage on board to a limit of 45 pounds (about 20 kilos), so not much difference for air passengers of today.

For his report, he had personally flown his own aircraft over an area covering 200 square miles searching for suitable sites to build an aerodrome that would be close enough to the burghs of Motherwell and Hamilton, if possible within 6 or 7 miles. He studied no less than 12 sites only selecting 3 that had the possibility of enough space and flat enough ground that he could recommend. Of the 3, one was just about possible but would need considerable land levelling, one was a little better but would have to have drainage installed as well as some land levelling, but the best by far was the land at Bothwell.

He went on to describe the area as being bounded by the main road from Uddingston through Bothwell to Hamilton on the northeast side, Blantyre Road on the southeast side, the natural boundary of the river Clyde on the west and part of Bothwell Castle Park on the northwest. In total, a large part of the land of Bothwell Castle Golf Club and a considerable area of woodland. Many trees along Blantyre Road and the main road would have to be felled to allow the aircraft to safely reduce height when landing and a clear pathway when taking off.

He had also noted a couple of obstructions that would have to be removed, one was fairly simple, that one was the old tower on Castle Avenue that could simply be knocked down. The second was the high voltage overhead power line crossing the land. It could be moved but that would require considerable negotiation with the power company and the probable associated expense. In the end the difficulties of negotiating the purchase of the land, the problem of moving the overhead power cables, levelling the ground and drainage problems, but also the decision by Glasgow City Councillors to go their own way, meant the project was abandoned.

TALES FROM BOTHWELL KIRKYARD



On Tuesday 28th November last year we had our second afternoon talk at 2pm. We had had a previous afternoon one in 2016 as a trial as some members worry a little about travelling to evening talks in the cold dark months of winter. Again this timing proved most successful with a large audience turnout.

Bill's talk, entitled "Tales from Bothwell Kirkyard", was, in spite of the title, a lighthearted one, highly informative and entertaining. He had been the architect of the project to catalogue and record the gravestones and their inscriptions leading to the production of a book. A number of volunteers had been recruited to help with examining, photographing and recording the gravestones. Bill gathered all their data and then went

on to dig into the history of the names on the stones. During those investigations he uncovered a great deal of information on many of the named persons, some sad, some heart-rending and some rather unusual.

Bill's researches into gathering all the information took many hours and many trips to libraries and other archives. Sometimes there was little or no information other than the date of death but sometimes a great deal could be found and that spurred Bill on to dig even deeper into the past of the deceased. That led to the discovery of some thought provoking articles relating to some of the wealthier families of the area and some that could be rather amusing.

Bill's knowledge of the information he had gathered was delivered in a most enjoyable talk and raised many giggles and laughs throughout the afternoon with only a couple of little sad bits concerning the deaths as recorded. The audience showed their appreciation with a resounding round of applause.

OFF THE RECORD: A LIFE IN NEWSPAPERS

Bothwell resident Tom Brown was speaker at our February meeting. Tom started his career in journalism in Kirkcaldy working for the Thomson publications including the Dundee Courier and the Sunday Post. He noted that he and the Queen started their jobs on the same day! His first assignment in February 1952 was to hear the proclamation of the Queen's accession to the throne being read from Kirkcaldy Town House. He then worked for the Edinburgh Evening Dispatch before moving to Fleet Street where, for 14 years, he was a reporter for the Daily Express. Returning to Scotland he covered news and current affairs for BBC Radio Scotland. He had a further spell with the Scottish Daily Express before moving to the Daily Record as a feature writer, columnist and political editor. Tom later became assistant editor of the Sunday Mail.

Throughout his journalistic career Tom has been a correspondent on many subjects including news, politics, crime, sports, medical matters and religious affairs. However as he said, tongue in cheek, his most notable spell was with the Dandy and Beano!

In 2010, the Scottish Newspaper Society presented Tom with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to journalism.

Tom spoke about how the newspaper business has changed in his lifetime. There has been a steady decline in sales of newspapers since their heyday in the earlier part of the last century. The internet, mobile phones and television are now supplying almost instantaneous news and comment and it is difficult for the press to compete. No longer do press journalists regularly go out to the scene of a story and find out the facts first hand. Now there is a tendency for them to sit at a desk at their computer, trawl social media and the internet and from this compose their article. With circulations nosediving Tom Brown was pessimistic about the future of newspapers.

Tom's talk was greatly appreciated by the audience who found his anecdotes about his life in newspapers entertaining and informative.

