

The JIM HAMILTON
HERITAGE SOCIETY
of COALBURN
Established 2004



AUTUMN 2005 NEWS LETTER

Compiled by **John Zawadzki**, Heritage Support Worker, **Coalburn One Stop Shop**

Extract from Coalburn Chronicle No. 8

Pages 196 - 198. *Author Jim Hamilton.*

The report on the death of **James Howie Clark** in the Hamilton Advertiser of 21 January 1924 was starkly brief and revealed only the bare bones of the tragedy.

Deaths due to colliery accidents were commonplace so merited little more than a passing note. (Taking an average throughout the year, four were killed each day in colliery accidents and for every one killed, 100 were injured, many seriously.

Here is the report:

'CLARK. Accidentally killed at Auchlochan Colliery on 18 January 1924, James Clark, beloved husband of Sarah Thomson.'

.....continued on back cover



**James Howie Clark
1869 — 1924**

'His greatest interest in life was in anything pertaining to nature — grasses, flowers, birds' eggs, geology.'

'His first wife was Marion Allan Pirrie who died aged 39 at Divity on 10th July 1916. Her cause of death as certified by Dr Harrison, (of Lesmahagow) was Acute Rheumatoid Endocarditis'

THE JIM HAMILTON HERITAGE SOCIETY OF COALBURN

AGM

Held on Wednesday 18 May 2005
at Coalburn One Stop Shop.

*The following office bearers were
elected:*

President Peter McLeish

Vice-president James Hamilton

Secretary / Treasurer Betty Bell

Membership Sec Anna McLachlan

First Honorary Member

Honorary membership was
presented at the AGM to heritage
worker John Zawadzki.

Acknowledgement for items of interest received from:

Molly Brownlie, Joan McMillan,
Nan Weir, Marene Johnstone, Helen
Lang, Betty Bell, Alec McLean,
Archie Cameron, Hugh Strang, John
Munro, Anna McLachlan, Margaret
Scott, Hugh Knox, Margaret
Findlay, Robert McLeish, Jim
Hamilton, Agnes Gray, Mabel
Dobbie, Archie Logan, Jean Lang,
Jean Wilson, Jimmy Brodie, Sam
Mason, Gala Day C'tee, Coalburn
Pipe Band, Coalburn Silver Band,
Coalburn Horticultural Society, Jim
Monie & John Young, Stonehouse.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Adults £10

Juniors (Under 16) £2

Syllabus 2005

Members and non-members welcome

7pm til 9pm

One Stop Shop, Coalburn

Tea/coffee & biscuits available

Wed 7 September

First meeting of new session

Monthly business meeting followed by
slide show by **John Zawadzki**

Wed 21 September

Guest speaker: Jim LEONARD
Lanarkshire Family History Society

Wed 5 October

Monthly business meeting followed by
informal discussion / slide show

Wed 19 October

Guest Speaker: Wilma BOLTON
Author/Historian, Lanarkshire Mining

Wed 2 November

Monthly business meeting followed by
informal discussion / slide show

Wed 16 November

Guest Speaker: James CLARKSON
Douglas Museum Trust

Wed 7 December

Monthly business meeting followed by
informal discussion / slide show

Heritage Displays

Fri 20 May Health Fair, Coalburn Primary School

Sat 22 May Coalburn Silver Band Concert, Jubilee Hall, Lesmahagow

Sun 23 May Lanarkshire Family History Fair, New Lanark

Sat 28 May Lesmahagow Farmers Society Agricultural Show, Brocketsbrae

Sat 2 Jul Coalburn Gala, Coalburn Bowling Club

Jul-Aug Coalburn One Stop Shop

Sat 27 Aug Coalburn Flower Show, Coalburn Primary school

Wed 31 Aug Swedish visitors, Coalburn Miners Welfare Club

Mon 19 Sep Development Trust Assoc. visitors, Coalburn Miners Welfare Club

Mon 10 Oct Darby & Joan Club, Coalburn Miners Welfare Club

Sat 29 Oct Friends of Biggar Museum Trust, Gillespie Moat Park Museum



Above Coalburn Gala Day. Great interest was shown in the heritage display at Coalburn's Bowling Club. Up to 200 folk visited the display between 1pm and 4pm Photo JZ

Health Fair

COALBURN Primary School hosted a health Fair on Friday 20 May 2005. All pupils, staff, parents, relations and a large number of members of the public attended, visiting the displays and exhibits.

Lanarkshire Health Board was represented by the school nurse, Margaret Wilson, and a number of her colleagues who gave advice on topics such as smoking cessation, immunisation, dental health and mental health awareness. Coalburn One Stop Shop organised a number of displays, including the local youth project, Citizens' Advice and the Jim Hamilton Heritage Society.

Also represented were Strathclyde Police (Mounted and Dog Branches), Strathclyde Fire Brigade, the Cancer Support Group, South Lanarkshire Road Safety Dept., St Andrew's Ambulance Association, Healthy Valleys and Talamh, the local environmental education charity based at Birkhill.

Dr Flowerdew spoke to classes in the afternoon, vividly demonstrating the need for healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle.

Below Motherwell College and Warburton's Bread gave a demonstration on healthy eating. Photo JZ





Above Coalburn IOR Pipe Band's John Morrison at Lesmahagow Highland Games, June 2005. Photo JZ

Coalburn IOR Pipe Band

COALBURN Pipe Band completed their competitive season in Belgium at the weekend, Sat 10th and Sun 11th September.

The band held their first practice session on the Friday when they attracted a large audience of local people from the town of Hasselt.

Saturday was competition day and the band made their way to the castle grounds at Alden Biesen for the day's activities. After a hard day of competition, they were asked to be centre band for the march past.

Congratulations to the band who were placed third in Grade 3 and second in the higher level Grade 2.

They celebrated their result at a ceilidh which featured the music of Scots folk bands Back of the Moon and Finlay MacDonald Band before heading back to Hasselt. On Sunday, the band performed in the folk festival at the castle as the Scottish weekend in Belgium celebrated their 20th anniversary.

The Advertiser Thursday 15 September 2005

COALBURN GALA 2005 Photos JZ



COALBURN GALA 2005 Photos JZ



Coalburn Horticultural Society

The Society has been in existence for over 100 years, this year's show being the 115th at which the Heritage Society had a presence for the first time and it proved to be popular.

Over the years other groups in the village have been part of the show, in 1953 the Coalburn Cage Bird Society were approached to give an exhibition of cage birds while a few years later the Women's Rural were asked to exhibit in an effort to enhance the Industrial Section of the show.

At the first ever show held on the 30th of August 1890 a marquee was used to house the exhibition, apparently the weather had not been too

good previously and this had affected the number of expected entries, nevertheless it was well received.

Several individuals had submitted flowers for exhibition only, Major Cunningham of Auchlochan, Mr Adams of Braehead and Mr Ritchie of Trows being among them.

The weather on the day was very good and the attendance was excellent. Other attractions taking place were football, cricket, various games and dancing. Lesmahagow I.O.G.T. Brass Band was present and enlivened the day's proceedings.

The judging over, the judges and committee retired to the reading room where Mr John Brown, baker of Lesmahagow did the necessary.

From the list of prize-winners the name of J.Ritchie was prominent in all of the classes with M.Grierson and T.Whyte well represented.

Interesting to note that there was a class confined to Coalburn Rows. S. Capie led the way in German Green, J.Stevenson took first prize for the Early Cabbage section and J. Thomson's Leeks were top of the class. For the ladies Mrs John Shaw took the honours in the Scones while Mrs John Smith triumphed with her cakes. David Smith was the Treasurer and Robert Gemmill was Secretary at that time.

In 1890 Bellfield Home Tent I.O.R. Pipe Band was in attendance and Messrs Smith and Reid gave an exhibition of dancing which was very much appreciated.



and its annual flower show

By the time the 20th Annual Show came round in 1909 Coalburn Public School was the venue, the entertainment was provided by Coalburn District Brass Band and the purveyor of the meal was Mr Johnston of Coalburn Store.

The committee over the years have used various halls in the village, in 1929 for example it was in the Institute Hall and a record number of entries, 863 were submitted. Major J.B.Greenshields of Westoun presided at the opening ceremony and called upon Mr Hugh Shaw Dunn from Ayr to declare the show open. The secretary at that time was William Knox. Winners in the Children's Section were Mary Richardson with her Collection of Leaves and Catherine Thomson came first in the Three Vases of Cut Flowers. In the Bird Section, William Bryson had 3 firsts and 3 seconds.

by Peter McLeish

Ten years later names appeared in the winners lists which were to crop up time and again over the next decades, James Weir, William McCaskie, Fred Kirk and John Laird. This was the 50th exhibition and the show was opened by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Home and he presented the Earl of Home Challenge Cup to Mr James Smith, Dunn Crescent who had the best show of vegetables.



Photos Exhibits from the Industrial and Horticultural Sections, Coalburn Primary School 27th August 2005.
Photos: Peter McLeish

Coalburn Horticultural Society and its annual flower show

1987 saw a husband and wife team, Jim and May McNeil lift the principal honours, the former had the best exhibit in the horticultural section while his good lady annexed the William Weir Trophy for the her Cut Flowers. Other well known names that year were John Arthur, John and Andrew Hamilton. The ladies vied for the McLean Trophy and The Coalburn Horticultural Shield with Mrs Greenshields and Mrs Johnstone being the recipients in that order.

The members have distributed excess funds to other organisations on many occasions, amongst the beneficiaries have been the Cubs, OAP Committee, Brownies, Douglas Hospital, the Darby and Joan Club and the Silver Band.

Jim and May McNeil are still to the fore, May being the current secretary with Mrs Marene Johnstone on the ladies committee. In recent years the loss of such stalwarts as John Arthur and John Weir has taken its toll on the group, however with new blood coming in the Society continues to flourish and it is encouraging that the schoolchildren play a big part in the exhibiting year after year.

Prize winners at the 2005 Flower Show



L to R - Jean Gemmell, Archie Maclean, Kirsty Matheson, May McNeil, Maene Johnstone, Nicole Struthers (front), Dr Ann Lang (judge), Jim Hamilton and Petrina Clark. Photo: Betty Bell

COALBURN MINING FATALITIES

Jimmy SPENCE

A distressing accident occurred on Saturday 31st August in the shaft at **Auchlochan No. 9 pit** when the oversman, **Jimmy Spence**, received terrible injuries from which he succumbed in a Glasgow Infirmary on Tuesday evening.

Hamilton Advertiser September 1941

Wull ROBERTSON

Wull Robertson was killed by a fall of stone in **Bellfield colliery**. His daughter Mary Robertson (later Mary Lynch), even from as far back as her school days, can remember vividly the circumstances of her father's death.

After sustaining the terrible injuries in the colliery, he was brought home in the horse-drawn ambulance to Middlemuir where they were living. Old Mrs Morrison, a near neighbour, was the first to enter the ambulance when it stopped at the Robertson home to see if she could render any help but he was beyond needing assistance.

So it was an impoverished upbringing for the Robertson family as money was sparse in the household when the breadwinner was killed and Mrs Robertson left with four young girls to rear. However, as all who lived through the early years of the century maintain, their own circumstances were straitened, willing to help their less fortunate neighbours.

Coalburn Chronicle, No. 8, page 170 (10)

Can you help ? The Jim Hamilton Heritage Society of Coalburn would like to compile a list of miners who lost their lives whilst working at Coalburn mines. Please contact the Society if you have any information on the matter.

Continued from front cover

My father remembers that day particularly well. He is not sure when he first heard of the accident but it would be soon after it happened as he was working at Auchlochan colliery that day, and news of a serious pit accident soon spreads among the workers, and just as quickly through the village when the news breaks there.

Jimmy was killed in **Auchlochan Number Six**, possibly at the part known as the 'Big Dyke'.

My father says Jimmy was regarded as a grand collier, having both the practical experience and the theory.

There had been a 'lunge' of coal after the firing of a shot. He went forward with his pick to clear away the loosened coal but some fell on him from the roof of the passageway. The weight pinned him down and, when freed, it appeared that his lungs had been pierced. He died on his way to Glasgow Royal Infirmary near Mount Vernon station.

My father also told me: "Geordie, Jimmy's eldest son and my brother-in-law, called at my home and asked me to accompany him to **Divity** (*in Waterside, near Coalburn*).

We walked over via Shoulderrigg and went into the house to speak to the woman who had been made a widow earlier that day. We sat and talked for a couple of hours about the funeral arrangements and who would be invited to attend.

We walked home together. I can always remember Geordie saying to me when we came out of the house at **Divity** *'I'm glad I'm no stayin' in that hoose the nicht.'*"

Jimmy Clark was buried in the ground at Lesmahagow cemetery belonging to the family of his second wife, Sarah, as follows:

Lairs belonging to **John Thomson**,

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Pages 196 - 198. Author Jim Hamilton.

Middleholm

Lesmahagow,
(*along the road
from Divity*)

purchased on 10th June 1898 -

Lair 1417

Janet W. M. Thomson, age 42,

Date of burial: 13 June 1898

James Clark, age 54

Date of burial 22 Jan 1924

John Thomson, age 98

Date of burial: 20 July 1943

Lair 1418

Sarah Clark, age 68

Date of burial: 13 July 1951

