

# Helensburgh Heritage Trust

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## Newsletter

The Newsletter is edited and published by Kenneth N Crawford 'Ardlamont' 3, Loch Drive, Helensburgh G84 8PY kn.crawford@virgin.net

Contributions and suggestions are urgently required and welcome

### WHAT'S IN A BOTTLE?

As many of you will know, an archaeological dig led by Fiona Baker was conducted in October at the site of the planned Waitrose store at Camis Eskan.

Among the finds was at least one bottle bearing the name of Frazer and Green, Chemists. While this business had its main premises at Buchanan Street, Glasgow, with branches at Sauchiehall Street and Townhead, there are several local connections, one of them being with Sir James George Frazer, World-famous anthropologist and writer

The founder of the firm, N.B.Frazer, died in 1836, only six years after setting up in business, being succeeded by his younger brother, Daniel. After the death in 1849 of the other partner, George Green, Daniel thereafter became sole partner. The business prospered, proudly describing itself during the Victorian era as "Chemists to Her Majesty."

Daniel and his family had been in residence at Blythswood Square in Glasgow, but later moved to Helensburgh, setting up home at "Glenlea", in East Argyle Street. As David Arthur points out in "200 Years of Helensburgh", this move may have been influenced by the notoriety brought to Blythswood Square in the wake of the 1857 trial of Madeleine Smith. In consequence of the move, Daniel's son, James George, born in 1854, was educated at Larchfield School, before proceeding to Glasgow University and a distinguished academic career.

To-day, Sir James George Frazer is often referred to as the father of modern anthropology, his name being immortalised through the classic work "The Golden Bough," a 12-volume magnum opus. Knighted in 1914, he was the recipient of many other awards and honours.

Bearing in mind the possible link with the Madeleine Smith affair, a matter also well-described in "200 Years of Helensburgh," there is another twist in that the name of Frazer and Green actually cropped up during the trial. Called as a witness for the defence, Peter Guthrie, who described himself as manager of Frazer and Green's establishment in Sauchiehall Street, told of how, early in 1856, a lady, whom he had seen several times before, entered the premises, wishing to buy some arsenic for cosmetic purposes. Although she was persuasive, he declined to sell her any.

One final question: when did Blythswood Square gain its, ahem, other reputation for notoriety?  
*AMcI*



CHRISTMAS

GREETINGS

TO ALL OUR

READERS

AND MAY

HELENSBURGH

HERITAGE

CENTRE

PROSPER

### Public Meetings

Wednesday November 28 —  
Professor Eleanor Gordon and  
Dr Gwyneth Nair: —  
*Madeleine Smith*

Wednesday January 30 2013 —  
Jim Grant:  
*The Scottish Maritime Museum*

Wednesday February 27 —  
Pat Wiseman and Isabel Stirling:  
*Mauchline Ware*

**Helensburgh Heritage Trust celebrates £3,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant for "The Helensburgh Area in the Second World War."** We are one of the first groups in the UK to receive a Heritage Lottery Fund 'All Our Stories' grant. It was announced on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Population Growth and the Railways

The Population of Helensburgh in -  
 1830 was 1,000  
 1841 was 2,229  
 1851 was 2,895 and in 1858 the Passenger Railway service from Glasgow commenced, by  
 1861 - population - 4,613 !

In 1863 'Bradshaw's Handbook' was published as the first tourist guide organised round the railways. Describing the line from Glasgow, the entry for Helensburgh reads - -

"Telegraph station at Glasgow, 24 miles. "This large and commodious watering place extends a "considerable distance along the mouth of the Gareloch, with "Glenfruin extending behind. It was founded by Sir James "Colquhoun, about 80 years ago, and is now become a place "of growing importance."

In 1871 the population was 5,964 and by  
 1881 was 7,693.

The West Highland Railway from the Upper Station to Fort William opened in 1894 and the rest is modern history!

*The description is quoted from the facsimile edition of Bradshaw's Descriptive Railway Handbook published in 2012 by Old House Books and already printed eight times!!!* KNC

### **Geilston Garden**

Geilston Garden near Cardross, which is in the care of the National Trust for Scotland, is seeking volunteers. The duties include welcoming visitors, collecting entrance fees, encouraging those who are not members of the NTS to join the organisation and giving information about the garden. Volunteers are also required to sell produce from the extensive kitchen garden and to answer general questions relating to the property. Volunteers for Fridays and Sunday afternoons are especially welcome. For further information please contact Joanna Gough Property Manager/Head Gardener, telephone number 01389 849187, e-mail [jgough@nts.org.uk](mailto:jgough@nts.org.uk) NA

Correction (or rather) addition:- The observant will have noticed an example of Desk-top Publishingitis in the last issue! The final line of the headline article on Page 1 was 'dropped.' It should have read:- development of the town. {The Trust} KNC

Within days of our mention of the state of the hands on the west face of the Town Clock, it was stopped and the one and a half hands moved to 12. From West Clyde Street and the Swimming Pool the time is now either Noon or Midnight and the end of Summer Time made no difference!

We very much regret to record the death of our Secretary and Treasurer, John W.P. Johnston. John had been a steady hand on our finances and formal activities since 2005. He was responsible for the excellent special exhibition '150 Years of Helensburgh's Railway' held in 2008 and the Militaria Exhibit currently in the Heritage Centre.

### Helensburgh Heritage Centre

We listen carefully to comments received or overheard from visitors to the heritage centre. As a result we now have a visitors book. This is not just a novelty, it is important that we gain some record of the numbers and origination of our patrons. An early question from many grantmaking or supportive organisations is always as to the footfall and spread of people benefiting from our enterprise. Conversely, visitors gain a great deal when there is a local steward present to answer questions and offer help and guidance. Your board wishes to compile a list of trust members who would be willing to give half a day from time to time at the library to 'meet and greet' all and any of the public who might appear. It should not be onerous, and may well be rewarding. Library hours suggest possible timings and we are not hoping to be able to fully staff the centre at all times. I was there recently when a couple of tourists – from Canada – walked in. They believe their relatives had come from Row (Rhu) and were shown the Helensburgh directories but they also checked out the history of the area as displayed and complimented us upon the range of history set out.

We are delighted to report that the first few written comments in the Visitors book are:-

*"Excellent and Informative."*  
 - Helensburgh

*"Very Interesting. Thank you."* Lenzie

*"Very exciting, will definitely visit again."* - Glasgow

*"Great success."* - China