

Helensburgh Heritage Trust Newsletter

Number 45 December 2008
Volume 11 No. 5

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Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland

UNESCO, five years ago, so defined the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.

Linda Fabiani, MSP Minister for Culture in her forward to a report, says Scotland's cultural heritage is an important part of what makes it such a fantastic place to work and do business and encourages the maintenance of that culture. Stage One is for the government to fully fund a National Inventory for Scotland, then for Local Authorities to lead a snowballing process collecting the data and inputting it into a 'Wiki' format which will allow entry restricted to authorised, and trained, personnel but unlimited access for end users.

Certainly in this area we have a musical tradition, but no Up-Helly-Aa; Tweed making; Peat cutting; Burryman; or Commonriding. Where are the social practices; oral traditions; performing arts; or traditional craftsmanships whose viability needs to be safeguarded by the local community, with or without wider assistance?

KNC

Future Meetings

The January public meeting at the Helensburgh Lawn Tennis Club on the 28th is to take the form of a **Helensburgh Memorabilia Night**. We hope that members will bring along any of their possessions which either relate to your own earliest days in the town, Or, in fact, contribute to our historical knowledge. Although the Board have not yet finalised the format of the evening, I guess that the idea will be for you either to tell the members about your artefact and its significance or to hand it in, perhaps in advance, for us to find an 'expert' to identify or otherwise explain it! This should be an interesting and sociable evening.

On February 25th we have a return visit by Dennis Royal to talk about **'Americans at Rosneath in the Second World War.'**

'Images across Space - looking at Personalities and Technologies in the Baird Television Company, is the title of Dr Douglas Brown's visit on 25th March. Many will remember the array of technology which accompanied Douglas's talk last year, and the beautiful miniature Televisor he has created.

All meetings commence at 7.30 p.m.

Site of Station

Another Puzzle, which emerged from the recent 150 Years of Railway Exhibition, was a map showing the intended route for the railway, from the *Glasgow, Dumbarton, and Helensburgh Railway Act 1855*. All histories of Helensburgh state that on opening the original station was about George Street and that it remained there for about five years. Thereafter it supposedly moved to its present site. However, an 1890 map shows that the station was always intended to be where it now is. But there is also a 'ticketing platform' near to George Street. Trains would have stopped there while passengers tickets were collected, prior to moving into the terminus - or was there a delay in construction of the final few yards? Why?

CD Record!

And finally on the Exhibition which was so well received; our member Dr Brian Cook has collated all of the paper exhibits into one electronic record contained on a Compact Disc. This is the first time that one of our exhibitions has been able to be preserved almost in its entirety for posterity, or at least for a future Heritage Centre!

We are also able to make copies of the disc available to any member of the Trust at the remarkable price of Two Pounds! Apply to Chairman Stewart Noble if you would like a copy for your own archive.

In the last issue Stewart Noble looked at the Trains in Helensburgh as shown in an 1879 Pocket Timetable (due to a typo stated to be 1979!) now he concludes by analysing the Ferry services available to travellers and residents .

The Steamer Timetable of the Gareloch

Once the train passenger reached Helensburgh station, there was the walk down to the Pier if he or she wished to catch a steamer. For some of the steamers the connection time was as short as 5 minutes! No dawdling to look in shop windows!

Once at the Pier four steamers a day left for the Gareloch (with a fifth on Saturdays) and also four a day for Dunoon (likewise with a fifth on Saturdays); two of the latter then continued to Sandbank in the Holy Loch. A further two went on to Dunoon and Arrochar (where there would have been a connection with the Loch Lomond steamers at Tarbet). Interestingly, at 8:45 a.m. two steamers left Helensburgh Pier at exactly the same time, and old photos do show two boats lying down the side of the Pier.

The Gareloch steamer in particular had a very tight schedule. Five minutes after leaving Helensburgh it was timed to be leaving Row (Rhu); a more leisurely 10 minutes were then allowed for the journey across the bay to Roseneath (sic). Five minutes later it was due to leave Clynder Pier and two minutes later Barremman Pier, having tied up, disembarked and embarked passengers! Not all steamers called at the latter.

Clynder and Barremman Piers were very close together, and they share an interesting history. The booklet "Clyde Piers - A Pictorial Record" by Joy Monteith and Ian McCrorie (1982) gives quite a bit of detail on the history of these two Piers being within 500 yards of each other. Clynder Pier had been opened in 1866 but about 10 years later Robert Thom, the owner of Barremman House and estate, built his own pier in order to entice feuars to his estate. This opened in 1878 (just one year before our timetable was produced) and, although it was not in the centre of the village, it gradually won the majority of the traffic, because of its superior structure and safer approaches. The old Clynder Pier was offered for sale in 1887, but there were no purchasers and it was closed in 1892 and demolished within a year. Just to add to the confusion, after the demolition, the new Barremman Pier was renamed Clynder!

After leaving Barremman, the timetable then allowed three minutes to cross the Loch to Shandon, meet a ferry which came out from the shore, unload and load passengers and depart again. And three minutes after leaving the Shandon ferry it was scheduled to have left Balernock Pier! *The ferry at Shandon was not a call for all steamers and it lasted until 1886 when a pier was built directly in front of Shandon Church. The pier at Balernock had only been opened in the year prior to our timetable and an old map appears to indicate that it was located near Balernock House, a little to the south of the Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane.* The steamer would once again head across to the west bank of the Loch. Four minutes after leaving Balernock, it would have met a ferry which came out from the shore at Rahane, a place which never had a pier. A more leisurely seven minutes was allowed to reach Mambeg Pier, the stump of which can still be clearly seen with a house now built on top of it. Finally, the ship was due to reach its destination at Garelochhead eight minutes after leaving Mambeg. This journey, with eight intermediate stops between Helensburgh and Garelochhead, was timetabled to take 47 minutes - and eight minutes later it was due to set off again on the return journey to Helensburgh!

All these piers and ferries lost their services at different times. The first to go was Balernock when the ferry at Shandon was replaced by a pier in 1886. As we have already seen, the building of Barremman Pier brought about the closure of Clynder Pier in 1892. Steamer services to Shandon ended during the First World War in 1915, although the structure remained in being until 1969. Rhu Pier only just survived the First World War, closing in 1920. The ferry at Rahane survived until 1932, and Mambeg Pier lost its service three years later. Garelochhead Pier was closed as an economy measure at the start of the Second World War in 1939 and Rosneath lost its service in 1942. The last of the Gareloch piers to go was Clynder (originally built as Barremman) also in 1942. Helensburgh Pier remained in use by Clyde steamers until 1952 when it closed because of increasing silting. However the return to service of P.S. Waverley in 1979 also brought Helensburgh Pier back into use - hence it is the only one to survive of all those listed in the 1879 timetable.

Of the other places served by steamer from Helensburgh in 1879 only Kilcreggan and Dunoon have regular steamer services today, whilst Hunter's Quay is used by Western Ferries and Blairmore receives occasional calls from the Waverley, that pier having recently been restored. Very little of Cove and Kirn Piers remain to be seen, but Sandbank Pier is still in use for cargoes of timber. As at Rahane, ferry boats no longer come out from Ardentiny to meet any steamers.

It has often been stressed that, while we now regard water as a barrier, in the past the sea was the highway. This old 1879 timetable shows just how true that was, and reminds us of a way of life that will never return. Indeed the timetable was produced during the few years when the number of piers and ferries served in the Gareloch was at its maximum.

OSCR Review

The 2nd Annual Review of The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator has been received. It gives quite an insight into the movements in the charity sector and the effects which the registration scheme is having to tighten up administration. Whilst 1,495 new charities were registered (114% increase) of which 264 were also registered in England and Wales. 13 did not meet the Charity Test and 798 were removed from the Register as having ceased to provide benefit. In all there are currently 23,812 Registered Charities in Scotland and only 150 complaints were made by members of the public and others. In March 2006 we mentioned the John Logie Baird Trust, it and the J L B Foundation have ceased and the Bell Baird Historical Trust is no longer on the Register

Heritage Forum

The Trust has re-established its membership of the Argyll and Bute Heritage and Museum Forum. At a meeting held in Oban on 6th October 13 groups reported upon their recent activities. The Islands are strongly represented, Easdale has acquired its museum from the private owner and it is now in Community ownership and building up a collection of Census and family records. Lismore no longer has paid members of staff but has recruited many volunteers. Much work has been done on emigrant kinships in readiness for the Homecoming. Strachur Smiddy came to a standstill early last year for lack of volunteers! However, closure brought much support and in May reopening every day has brought increased visitor numbers. Oban has its own premises and 50 volunteers but is very conscious of the need to change displays annually to encourage return visits. A year ago, Auchindrain, Campbeltown and Kilmartin House entered a Service Level Agreement with Argyll & Bute Council which has enabled joint projects and staffing to sort out the collections. The Forum is to produce an Argyll wide leaflet and I have contributed a piece about our achievements open to view and for visits.