

Helensburgh Heritage Trust Newsletter

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The Newsletter is edited and published by Kenneth N Crawford at 'Ardlamont' 3, Loch Drive, Helensburgh G84 8PY kn.crawford@virgin.net
Contributions and suggestions are urgently required and welcome!

Havelock Place formerly a Railway Yard?

The documentation accompanying a planning application to demolish Clydevue Eventide Home and build sheltered accommodation included maps to show the uses over the years. One, from 1898, showed a railway goods yard to the north of where Havelock Place now is.

"The West Highland Railway - Plans, Politics and People" by John McGregor (2005) relates that various construction depots were retained after the opening in 1894 to deal with snagging. Our Chairman believes that rock excavated from the East Abercromby Street cutting was used to build the embankment from Craigendoran to Kirkmichael. If so, Havelock Place would have been almost midway and ideal for a depot. Probably it would have been removed within a few years and the land would then have become available for development. However we had no prior knowledge, nor of any trace on the ground! We are grateful to Gordon Tran for noticing this and would be especially pleased if anyone can supply further information!

HSN

200 Years of Helensburgh

The hardback definitive history of the Town, published in 2002, is reaching the end of its print run and has been a most successful venture by the Trust. It is known to be a standard work of reference for many seeking some special fact about the town and its origins and development. Copies are available at Bookworms on East Clyde Street at the published price of £20. A Members discount is still available from your Editor or Chairman.

KNC

helensburgh-heritage.co.uk

I wonder if members realise or appreciate the wealth of local information that has been collected together and is displayed on our site? The original website was attacked by a malicious person or persons and a great deal of dedicated work has been put in by our Webmaster, Jim Chestnut and Minute Secretary, Donald Fullarton to rebuild and redesign our 'public face.' Believe it or not, there are 330 text articles on many topics and 822 picture images in the Photo Gallery and available to all who ask their web-browser for 'Helensburgh.' Your Board of Directors were recently astonished to be given the statistic that, since the rebuild in July 2008, the site has had 233,517 visitors!

Who! Where from? Why? What for?

Could it just be that our town and its history is of much more interest than some of our civic leaders think?

One answer came in May in an e-mail from 'Gish' in a small town North of Yellowknife in the Canadian North-West Territories. It asked if I was the same K N C from Staffordshire who wrote "The History of the McVannel Clan" 2nd edition in 1980. Her father, in Thunder Bay, Ontario, had told her of phone conversations at that time, and somehow knew that I had moved home, but had no idea to where! She was to holiday in Ireland, to visit a school friend, and hoped to also visit Scotland and see the remains of the family croft on Kintyre. I was the only Kilt on Central Station that evening but she still managed to miss me! But in June Jean and I had a very pleasant couple of days with our own 'Homecoming.'

The power of connections on the Web!
K.NC.

Helensburgh Heritage Trust

Winter programme 2009- 2010

All meetings take place in the Clubhouse of Helensburgh Lawn Tennis Club in Suffolk Street and, with the exception of the October meeting, they start at 7:30 p.m..

Wednesday 30th September - **Helensburgh Memorabilia Night** -

Please bring artefacts, & give advance notice if possible.

Wednesday 28th October - at
**7.00 p.m. Annual General
Meeting** followed by
Simon Green of the Royal
Commission on the Ancient
and Historic Monuments of
Scotland:

Ancient and Historic Monu- ments in the Clyde area.

Wednesday 25th November -
Keith Hall:
Faslane.

Wednesday 27th January
Dr Martin MacGregor:
**The Battle of Glen Fruin -
A MacGregor Perspective.**

Wednesday 24th February -
Mary Haggarty:
**The Arrochar, Tarbet and
Ardlui Heritage Group.**

Wednesday 31st March-
Charlotte Rostek-Davis:
Dumfries House.

The Barracks

Despite having been demolished and cleared more than 150 years ago, the housing in James Street, sometime known as 'The Barracks' continues to excite interest today.

Built before the middle of the 19th century, clearance took place in 1896. Over the years many, many families resided in conditions which horrified the Town Council Sanitary Officers, even then! Probably built by 'a native of our Sister Island' and then sold to 'a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Glasgow.' There were never military quarters in the town, and it was thought that the name had come from many ranges and sub-divisions and the high density of population.

On about 1,540 square yards there were rows of one storied half-houses with roofs sloping down to about 4 feet. Several families occupied each room, with their boundary marked out in chalk on the floor. In 1851 there were 20 households, which had risen to 42 by 1861 but 36 in 1881. None were unemployed and occupations listed as agricultural, road, mason's, gardener's and general labourers, a slater, shoemaker, washerwoman, housekeeper, seamstress and laundress.

The end came soon after rioting and drunkenness in August 1895. At about 7 p. m. hostilities opened with a skirmish among women described as resembling a scene in a wild beast show. When the men returned from public houses after 10 o'clock the scene was indescribable and the police were powerless. The Helensburgh and Gareloch Times felt that the problem was so deep rooted that nothing short of complete annihilation of these wretched buildings would produce any lasting result., although it did admit that the rioting on Saturday night was not confined to The Barracks.

Over the decades the censuses did not list anyone as 'Pauper' so that it may well be inferred that the Barracks was a busy and industrious place despite very hard and crowded living conditions.

Abridged by Kenneth Crawford from research by Alastair MacIntyre into the newspaper archives.

The Daily Express Television Kit Replica

A small but historic moment in the life of the Trust was reached at ten to eight in the evening of Monday 16th August at Helensburgh Library. Brandon Inglis, an expert in Television history and electronics, completed the installation and switched on our replica 'Daily Express Television Kit.' And achieved an image similar to that first created by John Logie Baird. That it was in his home town and on the site of his Father's Church added to the excitement. That the image was unstable - rotating or rising and lowering - only demonstrates the extent of the discovery, and JLB's determination to pursue a commercially viable invention. The D-I-Y Kit, which was sold mail order, allowed the curious and creative in the London area to see for themselves the first TV Broadcasts by the BBC. There will be teething troubles, but we hope shortly to be able to allow library visitors to push a button and have a three minute demonstration.

KNC

Housing Rents

100 years ago

The trust has acquired a Rent Book relating to three properties in Helensburgh and covering the period 1893 - 1950. Rent was payable half-yearly in November and May, two remained constant at £9.15s. from 1893 to 1920 but the third was reduced to £9.10s in 1908.

Three rent increases appeared in 1921, 25%, 15%, and a rates uplift. Reasons not given but the rent was then steady from 1922 - 32 at £73. Extra income in the form of a One Shilling (00.05p) wayleave from the National Telephone Company, probably for a Telegraph pole..

On the side of expenditure, rates for the County and Parish Councils and Poor School were shown as was the Fire Insurance, income tax and variable feu duty. Deficits only appeared in 1916 because of the payment of £27 "redemption duty," this may have been a final payment of tithe to the Church. In 1921 £36 'causalty duty' was paid -which could be a miss-spelling of 'casualty' - a charge paid to a Feu Superior by a vassal on transmission of land upon death, gift or sale. Or does anyone know better?

The cost of alterations to the properties caused a loss in 1933-34.

KNC from report by HSN

Brandon Inglis makes the final adjustments

