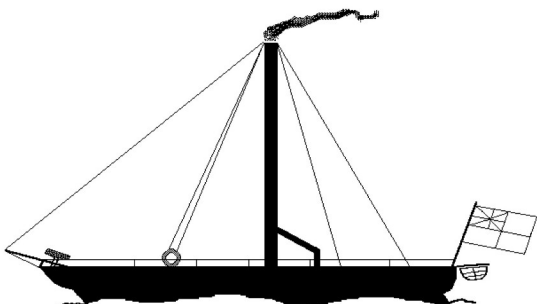


HELENSBURGH HERITAGE TRUST



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NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2025

A big thank you! This goes to all members who paid their subscriptions at the start of April. It gives us a very good idea as to where our finances will be for the rest of the year.

A second big thank you! This goes to all members who are now paying their subscriptions by direct debit. This will make administration easier for us in the future although, I must confess, the changeover has perhaps been a little fraught!

So now a plea! If you're still paying by standing order, please consider paying your subscription by direct debit. All you have to do is click on this link and then follow the instructions - <https://pay.gocardless.com/BRT0003JAEAAZ9V>

And now a second plea! Some members underpaid their subscriptions at the start of April, while others overpaid. Anyone who fell into either of these categories will have received an email from Stewart Noble at the end of April. If you got one and have not acted on it, then please do so. If you have any doubts, please contact Stewart – for his contact details see above.

A third plea – housekeeping. Please let Stewart Noble know if there has been any change in your contact details. He also wants to know if you have ceased to be a taxpayer, or have just become one – this is for the purpose of claiming gift aid on subscriptions.

And a final plea – new Treasurer wanted! Stewart Noble has decided that the time has now come when someone should be taking over the role of treasurer from him. He does not expect to be swamped with volunteers, so don't be backwards about coming forwards!

Next winter's programme. The speakers are close to being finalised, but we can already give you the dates for our public meetings – they are

Wednesday, 24 September 2025

Wednesday, 29 October 2025

Wednesday, 26 November 2025

Wednesday, 28 January 2026

Wednesday, 25 February 2026

Wednesday 25 March 2026

As always, the meetings will be held in the marriage suite of the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre at 38 East Clyde Street

Please remember however that **the meetings will start at 7:00pm, and NOT at 7:30pm** – so please put the correct times in your diaries!

Storm Eowyn. This struck Helensburgh on 24 January, and it removed around half of the roof from the leisure centre and swimming pool which was just over 2 years old. Argyll & Bute Council have suggested that it might be reopened in March 2026 – we shall just have to wait and see whether this prediction is accurate.



Meantime, to try to minimise the effects of the damage, the gym equipment from the leisure centre was moved into the library, and the library in turn has been moved (in a much reduced fashion) to the pavilion in Hermitage Park, which fortunately had become vacant just a few months before the storm. Exercise classes are being held in the Victoria Halls. There is of course no indoor swimming but, for those who are really keen, there is always the Clyde.....!

Part of the roof blows off! Photo by Ross Gardner; reproduced in the Helensburgh Advertiser

All of this has meant that displays by the Heritage Trust in the library have been moved, and access to much of the library is now restricted.

Displays in the Civic Centre. Our semi-permanent displays in the large cabinet linking the reception area of the Civic Centre to the former school are still there. However there is now a new display in one of the corners of the reception area. This has been a combined effort by the Heritage Trust and Andrew Black of the Caledonian Society on the theme of Henry Bell and the “Comet”, and it is well worth a look.

trove.scot - a new website from Historic Environment Scotland. This new website describes itself as "the Key to Scotland's Past – Explore locations you love through our archives and discover designated places." It then goes on to say that it contains 1.2 million images from the Historic Environment Scotland archives, 335,000 records of Scotland's places, and 2000 culturally significant objects.

However, approach the images with caution! Stewart



Noble decided to see what trove.scot contained about Helensburgh, and very quickly came across a photo which showed himself. The snag was that the website dated the photo to about 1910 - over 30 years before he was born!

Consequently he was in touch with Historic Environment Scotland and is pleased to report that it is now correctly dated at 1960 or 1961. In case you don't recognise him, Stewart is the one on the left, Lesley Marshall (now Lesley Kennedy) is walking beside him, then there is Jennifer Taylor and on the right is Pierre Vidal-Naquet, a French boy who was staying with Stewart.

The Heritage Trust's book collection. Over the years the Heritage Trust has been given a number of books. Some deal with local subjects, while others have been written by local authors on a variety of subjects, some local and some not. If any member wishes to borrow any of these books, Stewart Noble can send a list of them.

Wartime Craigendoran. This interesting painting appeared on the very informative Helensburgh Memories Facebook page— set up by a certain Robert Ryan!

It shows Craigendoran Pier in around 1940. At that time there was considerable maritime traffic on the Clyde, with cargoes both being loaded and unloaded.

Because not all of this could be accommodated at deepwater ports such as Greenock, Craigendoran (despite its shallow depth) was

called on to help and, as the painting shows, cargoes came and went in barges to and from ships lying offshore.



This painting was one of a series on emergency ports commissioned by a firm of stevedores called Scruttons. Craigendoran was painted by Arthur JW Burgess, and the painting now belongs to the Scottish Maritime Museum in Irvine. It was painted before the opening of Faslane as Military Port no. 1, and it gives a good idea as to why the port at Faslane was required.

When the Heritage Trust recorded the wartime memories of people living in Helensburgh, Jack Dennett recalled that his class at school was very much swollen in size – “there were 140 in it!” - and that it included Belgian and Dutch children, whose parents had fled from the Germans in fishing boats. Did some perhaps come in barges too?

50 Mile Walk from Killin to Helensburgh in 1964. On 18 May 1964 a group of Helensburgh youngsters set out to walk 50 miles from Killin to Helensburgh in order to raise money for charity. The charity in question was Christian Aid and in this 6 minute video Jock Troup, who was both an organiser and a participant, recounts his memories almost exactly 61 years later to a

Christian Aid service being held in Cults Parish Church, Aberdeen on 18 May 2025 – have a look at <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/16bz8ouCbM/>

The Past Is a Foreign Country – Number 1. In the early 1940s Edward B Maclachlan wrote some historical notes on Helensburgh. These have never been published and were recently presented to the Heritage Trust. He was town clerk of Helensburgh, as had been both his father and grandfather.

When Helensburgh received its charter in 1802, the holding of markets and fairs was one of its privileges. However they were not particularly remunerative. Edward Maclachlan noted that "The Revenue from the 4 annual fairs must have been negligible, for the rights were sold to one Robert McNeil for 5 shillings. The council had no power to levy assessments. [One shilling is now 5p].

"The Council's meagre income was supplemented with some ingenuity. A Councillor failing to attend Rhu Parish Church was fined one shilling (for failing to sit in the appropriate seat at Rhu Church the fine was one shilling). On one occasion the Burgh Officer failed to attend Divine Service and in his case the fine was £1, but evidently his need of divine guidance was greater than his employers'. For failing to attend a meeting the Provost was fined 10 shillings, a Baillie 5 shillings and a Councillor two shillings and sixpence. A Burgess declining the honour of the Magistracy was fined 10 shillings and for declining the office of Councillor 5 shillings."

The Past Is a Foreign Country – Number 2. A book recently gifted to the Heritage Trust was "The Old School of Cardross – a chapter in village life", written by Eunice G Murray in 1949.

She noted that "To guard against idleness which was a common complaint, it was recommended that each pupil when not otherwise employed should commit some lines of poetry to memory. Many of the poems considered suitable for this purpose dealt with moral duties, such as obedience to teachers and parents, virtues popular with the poets, and notably with Dr Watts. Of him it may be remarked that he had little use for female learning, as more than once he stated that it was totally unnecessary for girls to learn the art of writing, although obedience especially for the weaker sex he considered essential!

"Poem on Obedience by Dr Watts"

Let children that would fear the Lord
Hear what their teachers say:
With reverence meet their parents' word,
And with delight obey.

Have you not heard what dreadful plagues
Are threatened by the Lord

To him that breaks his father's law
Or mocks his mother's word?

What heavy guilt upon him lies!
How cursed is his name!
The ravens shall pick out his eyes
And eagles eat the same."

***Helensburgh Heritage Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
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