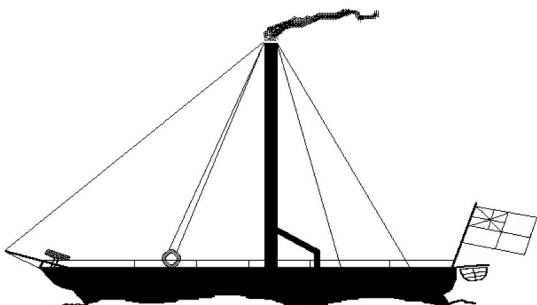


HELENSBURGH HERITAGE TRUST



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NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2025

Death of Alistair McIntyre. I'm afraid to say that Alistair, for many years a stalwart trustee of the Heritage Trust, died suddenly while cycling in Glen Fruin at the end of July. He had an absolute wealth of knowledge on local history, and his contributions at board meetings were always interesting, although I suspect that his deafness made it difficult for him to follow what was going on all the time. He will be sorely missed, not just by the Heritage Trust, but also by all the other local organisations with which he was involved. His funeral has already taken place.

Winter programme. Here are the dates and speakers.

24 September 2025 – Stewart Noble: The Life of John Logie Baird



29 October 2025 - Bill Kean: Photography and the Fiddle. Bill is a regular contributor to the Scotsman Calendar, and was a music teacher.

26 November 2025 – Annual General Meeting; followed by John Urquhart: The Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs.

28 January 2026 - Anne Urquhart: The Maid of The Loch and Other Loch Lomond

Steamers.

25 February 2026 - Stewart Cunningham and Robert Ryan: The early 20th century photography of Helensburgh man Robert Thorburn.

25 March 2026 - Julian Hill: Rocks Round Helensburgh along the Highland Boundary

*All meetings will be held on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm (and **NOT** 7:30, as in previous years) in the marriage suite of the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre, 38 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh G84 7PG.*

Please remember to enter through the door of the former school which is marked "Girls".

Outdoor Museum competition. This is being organised by Argyll & Bute Council, and through it local groups and individuals are being offered the chance to work with an appointed artist to design and create a new artwork for the Outdoor Museum in Colquhoun Square.

Do you have an idea that celebrates the heritage and spirit of Helensburgh that you would like to see in the Outdoor Museum? More information on the competition can be found at

<https://www.theoutdoormuseum.co.uk/community-competition/>



Please note that the deadline for submission is 10 November 2025 – so please get your thinking caps on now!

Replica of Henry Bell's "Comet" to be replaced. The original "Comet" was built for Henry Bell at John Wood's yard in Port Glasgow In 1812, and a working replica of this paddle steamer was produced for the 150th anniversary, when it travelled across the Clyde to Helensburgh. Latterly it was sitting on a plinth close to Port Glasgow town centre, but in 2023 it was decided that the hull was in such poor condition that it had to be demolished, although the engines were saved.

Now Inverclyde Council has set aside £540,000 for the construction of another replica as part of its plans for the



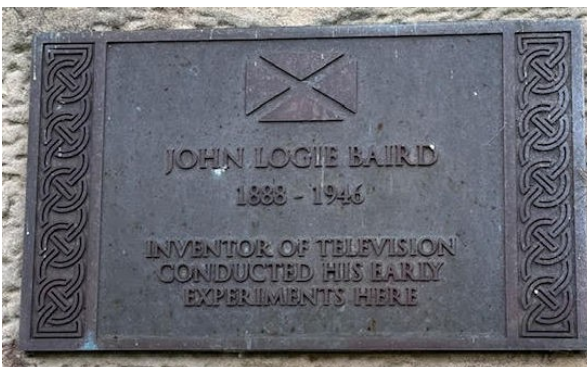
The original Comet replica paddling to Helensburgh in 1962

regeneration of Port Glasgow town centre. Sadly, although the engines may be going back into this new replica, it will be static, and so we shall not be seeing Europe's 1st commercial steamship once more travelling on the waters of the Clyde. However Inverclyde Council have to be commended for once again commemorating this important piece of local and Scottish heritage.

The Annual Report and Accounts can be seen on the Heritage Trust website at https://www.helensburgh-heritage.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1750:2024-25-chairmans-annual-report-accounts&catid=10014&Itemid=113

For those of you without access to the Internet, a printed copy of the annual report and accounts will be sent out in November, prior to the AGM which is being held at the start of our monthly meeting on Wednesday 26th November.

Second plaque on John Logie Baird's birthplace. I have always known that there was a plaque commemorating the birth of John Logie Baird attached to the wall of The Lodge, 121 West. Argyle Street. However what I was not aware of was that a second plaque was put there in 2013 by Historic Scotland – poor marks for my powers of observation! My thanks go to Fiona Baker for enlightening me about its existence.



The second plaque

The first plaque was attached to the building by Helensburgh Town Council in 1952, and at the same time a larger plaque was attached to the Municipal Buildings in East Princes Street.



The first plaque

All of which brings me round to

The Centenary of the Invention of Television by John Logie Baird. A programme of events has already got underway and you can read more about them at <https://jlbtv100.org/>

The next of these events will take place on Thursday 2nd October when Stopgap

Cinema with support from Film Hub Scotland are showing the film "The Man Who Saw the Future" in the Civic Centre Annex. 2nd October is the centenary of the day on which John Logie Baird first successfully transmitted television. The film screens at 6:00 PM and doors open at 4:30 PM for refreshments and a buffet. All are welcome and entry is pay what you can from £3 upwards.



Tickets are available at

<https://www.ticketebo.co.uk/stopgap-community-cinema-cic/invention-of-television-2nd-october>

The calendar of events will be regularly updated and a lot is planned - in particular an exhibition will be taking place in co-operation with Iain Logie Baird, the grandson of the inventor.

New Treasurer Still Wanted. Stewart Noble reports that he has not been overwhelmed by volunteers seeking to replace him as treasurer – in fact the response has been positively underwhelming. So, if you were hesitant to come forward when Stewart made his 1st plea, please don't hesitate now.

And it would be good to have a few more trustees as well....!

Local Place Plan – Help to Shape the Heritage of the Future! The Scottish Government is asking local community bodies to develop Local Place Plans in order to stimulate and encourage debate about the future of the community. Helensburgh Community Council has just drawn up one of these and it can be seen online at <https://www.visionforhelensburgh.org/plan>

The Community Council wants your feedback on its proposals by 17th October.

If you cannot see the proposals online, folders available to read are at Destination Helensburgh, Helensburgh Parish Church, the Library, and the Civic Centre, along with paper copies of the response form.

Degaussing – and an Invitation! In 1937 Denis Gill won a scholarship to study Electrical Engineering at Faraday House in the University of London. However his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Along with many of his fellow students he was recruited as a scientific officer at the Admiralty from July 1940. His main responsibility was for degaussing ships to protect them from magnetic mines.

His postings took him to the Forth, Scapa Flow in Orkney, Belfast, and Sierra Leone. On

his return from west Africa he was based at Ardencaple Castle. In December 1944 he was posted to India. By 1945 Denis was helping to prepare the fleet for the planned invasion of Japan.

While in Helensburgh he received this poetic party invitation from a couple of Wrens (members of the Women's Royal Naval Service) who were based at Portkil for the degaussing range beside Kilcreggan.

*Pat and Sally would be highly delighted
To entertain you and so you're invited
On March 29 to "Strathculm" on the hill
To join in the fun and to sample their still.
It marks no occasion so far as they ken;
Merely an excuse to rope in some men.
So if you can take it, you might write to say,
"Regret I'll be there 'cos I'm free on that day".*

Pat was Patricia Farley who actually wrote an extensive memoir about her time at Portkil – and the Heritage Trust has a copy of this. "Strathculm" is the name of the house which still stands at 32 West Montrose Street; both before and after the war it belonged to Mrs Percy Connor.

More importantly, what was Pat and Sally's still producing, did Denis sample it, and did he enjoy the party? Thanks go to his son David for sending me this.

