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Our Winter Season events enjoyed good turnout despite the snowy, hard winter. Thanks to all those who supported our meetings despite the very cold, miserable nights which happened so often.

The programme was very varied and people seemed to enjoy it. We think that the Summer Programme will also be enjoyable and look forward to seeing as many Members as possible at these events.

During the Winter Season, we had to use a temporary venue at Alloa Academy, because the Town Hall was closed for refurbishment. We were disappointed by the Council's failure to provide a sound system, although they had promised to do so. They also would not allow us to serve Tea and Coffee because of the Health and Safety rules. We could not use our new Sound System in the Academy building, but otherwise this system has been a big success.

The Committee apologise for any inconvenience that may have been caused. It shows us what a good job Jack and Sadie Archibald do in providing us with Tea and Coffee at the normal venues.

I would like to close by thanking all the people who contributed reports and articles to this issue of the Newsletter. Their efforts are very much appreciated.

Summer programme 2011

Meet at Alloa Health Centre car park –Wednesday 7 pm, Saturday 9.30 am

Wednesdays

- May 11 Linn Mill to Clackmannan (Betty Roy 01259 213954)
25 Clackmannan to King's Seat (Susan Mills 01259 216913)
- June 8 Gartmorn & Cowpark Wood (circular)
(Jack & Sadie Archibald 01259 215873)
22 Plean Country Park – south side (Eddie Stewart 01259 216878)
- July 13 Alva Glen (Betty Roy 01259 213954)
27 Larbert House & surrounding area with Gordon Harper Forest Ranger
(Isobel Wood 01259 750552)
- Aug 10 Gartmorn Lade / Cast / Carsebridge / Cats Close / Waterwheel /
Brothie Burn (circular) (Jack & Sadie Archibald 01259 215873)
24 Blackgrange / Cambus Pools / Cambus (circular)
(Jack & Sadie Archibald 01259 215873)

Saturdays

- May 28 Blackness Castle & Union Canal (Linlithgow)
(Jack & Sadie Archibald 01259 215873)
- June 25 Killin & Macnab Cemetery (Betty Roy 01259 213954)
- July 23 Antonine Wall with James Coleman of Croy History Group
(Eddie Stewart 01259 216878)
- Aug 27 Shale bings Almond Valley Heritage Centre (Livingston)
(Jack Archibald 01259 215873 & Eddie Stewart 01259 216878)
- Sept 10 Coffee Morning,
Ludgate Church Hall, Alloa 10 am -12 noon. Tickets £1.50

Spring Weekend Field Trip:

15th to 19th April Dornoch

**Most outings require shared transport, stout footwear and suitable clothing.
On Saturdays bring packed lunches. Visitors are welcome for most events!**

**STIRLING FIELD & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
SUMMER OUTINGS 2011**



WEEK-END OUTINGS

Meet at the Smith Museum, Dumbarton Road at 9:30 am unless otherwise specified. Bring packed lunch, weatherproof gear and stout footwear.

Saturday 7th May

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum

The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum comprises Burns Cottage where he was born and a newly built modern museum housing the world's most important collection of his works as well as personal items used by him. The museum is open from 10am to 5.30pm and entry is free for NTS members, or £8.00 full price and £5.25 for OAP & children.

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)

Saturday 11th June

Crannog Centre, Loch Tay & Castle Menzies

We visit the reconstructed Crannog on Loch Tay based on the underwater Archaeology which has been carried out over the last 30 years. Castle Menzies was begun by Sir Robert Menzies and completed by his son in 1528. The Family, of Norman Descent, held land in the "Slios Min" or Smooth Side of Rannoch until 1914.

Leader: Elizabeth Patterson (01786 860650)

Saturday 16th July

Auchendrain

Approximately 6 miles south of Inveraray it is a survival of an old type township or "baffle" which time forgot. Traditional buildings, implements and field layout.

Leader: Elizabeth Patterson (01786 860650)

EVENING OUTINGS

Meet at the Smith Museum at 6:30 pm unless otherwise specified.

Tuesday 12th April

Flanders Moss

The walk from West Moss-side farm will give a chance to look at the remains of the moss rooms plus associated drainage ditches and the former pool to help with the casting of the peats. We will also look for the rare plant and bird life of the moss. Easy walking but wet underfoot, so wear boots or wellingtons. Coffee, tea & biscuits afterwards at West Moss-side (£1).

Leader: Colin Davenport (01259 743257)

Tuesday 10th May

Sherriffyards Colliery

The Alloa Coal Company sunk the Sherriffyards pit in 1895. It was serviced by a waggonway down through Sauchie to the port at Alloa and remained in production until

1921. Walk along the waggonway to the remains of the wheelhouse, pump chimney and screening plant. Easy, flat walk of about 2 miles total.

Leader: Colin Davenport (01259 743257)

Tuesday 14th June
Stirling's Royal Landscapes

Lead by **John Harrison**

Recent research has revealed new evidence about the landscapes around Stirling Castle. This short walk will provide an opportunity to see the quite extensive visible remains (road, terracing, midden deposits, the 16th century tournament ground etc).

Contact: Rita Barth (01786 850271)

Tuesday 12th July
Gargunock House & Church

A walk around Gargunock House of which the oldest part probably dates from the 16th century. Now a composite structure having been altered many times, the classical facade finally being completed in 1794 before the reformation Gargunock church came under the Augustinian Canons Regular of Cambuskenneth. The Old Kirk was replaced between 1626-1629 and another major reconstruction was carried out in 1774.

Leader: Elizabeth Patterson (01786 860650)

Tuesday 9th August
Dun, Castlehill Wood, Near Stirling

This accessible and well preserved dun, or fortified dwelling, is thought to date from the 1st or 2nd Century AD. Discovered in 1952, excavated in 1955, and never backfilled, it provides an interesting glimpse into the past.

Leader: Paul Sorowka(01786 464578)

Tuesday 13th September
Bannockburn Guddle

Not for fish but for archaeology. The Bannock burn was one of the earliest industrial landscapes in Scotland. Come for a stroll along the Bannock burn from Spittal's bridge and see what we can find in the shallows that relate to this heritage.

Leader: Colin Davenport (01259 743257)

Transport is by private cars, sharing petrol costs

The Society exercises normal prudence in planning and conducting its outings; members take part on the understanding that they do so at their own risk.

Please notify the Leader/Contact if you later find you can't attend an outing you have previously selected.

Scottish Charity No: SC026822

The Conference Season 2010.

This started with The Archaeology Scotland A.G.M. and Membership Day, on Saturday 9th October, 2010 in the A.K. Bell Library in Perth. Nine members attended on the day.

After registration, tea/coffee and introductions by the President, we were treated to a very good talk on the work of Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, This was followed by a talk on prehistoric excavations at Gleneagles, Perthshire. The A.G.M. followed, then lunch.

In the afternoon we had a guided walk round Medieval Perth culminating with a talk in Perth Museum plus a chance to see Perth's 800th Anniversary Exhibition. This was called Skin and Bone, life in Medieval Perth.

Tayside and Fife Archaeology Conference was held on Saturday 6th November 2010 in the Younger Hall, St Andrews, three members attending. The first lecture was on the recovery of a Bronze Age log boat at Carpow on the River Tay. This was followed by Wartime Defences in Fife and Perthshire during World War 11. Next, was a talk on a survey of places of worship in Angus and the Mearns. Quartzite artefacts at Dun, Angus was next on the list. The afternoon session continued with a talk on Coastal Erosion in Angus and Fife and some recommendations on how it can be prevented. Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust's work on the Military Road System of the 18th Century was then discussed. This was then followed by a light hearted look at three Bronze Age pots discovered in Fife and ending up in the Borders. Deer Parks was next on the agenda, but the Deer Park in Sauchie was not mentioned. Two short talks followed "Pot Pourri" a few subjects of varying topics. The session concluded with a clay building in the Carse of Gowrie. What a varied array of topics.

Friday 12th November saw four members off to High Street, Edinburgh, the venue being The Scottish Storytelling Centre, for the A.G.M of the Scottish Local History Forum. We had a series of talks in the morning

the main topic being the life of Sir John Sinclair and his contribution to local history. This was followed by the A.G.M. the subject being “The state of the Forum” and what needs to be done to keep it viable. This has been ongoing for the past year and a few new ideas were put forward. After lunch we made our way down the High Street to the Canongate Kirk where the afternoon session was held. This commenced with another insight into the life of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster. The final talk was on the Church of the Canongate and the surrounding area, and how Canongate was a town in its own right. The afternoon finished with tea and coffee served by the Minister of the Kirk.

Our final outing was to Kirkcaldy on 6th November 2010 for The Fife Gravestone Conference; three members attended. This was another good event with a range of speakers talking on various topics, always reverting back to graveyards.

It commenced with a talk on the Scots Cemetery in Calcutta (India) and how a trust has been set up to rejuvenate it, and care for its future. The next talk was about the victims of the Tay Bridge disaster, their backgrounds and final resting place. An excellent talk on the Necropolis in Glasgow by the Friends of the Necropolis followed. Covenanters Graves was the next topic, an attempt to find and conserve the gravestones of the Covenanters dotted about Scotland. After lunch the session began with the title “From the Ridiculous to the Ridiculous”. This is about the different ways people decorate the gravestones of their loved ones, from plastic flowers, little gardens, to the Simpsons. This was followed on a more serious note by a member of the trustees of the Scottish National War Memorial, Edinburgh Castle; from its inception to the present day with all the changes in between. Final item was graveyard design around the world, a look at the different ways people and religions cater for their dead. All told a very interesting day out with a lot learned.

One conference I did miss was Man in The Landscape at Stirling University held on the same day as the Kirkcaldy venue, but other members attended and will give an update.

Jack Archibald.

RUSSIAN LACQUER BOXES

Summary of Meeting on 11 October 2010 for inclusion in CFSS Newsletter

The Committee made a courageous decision by inviting one of the Society's own members, Cairns Mason, to open the Winter 2010/11 lecture season with his talk on *Russian Miniature Lacquer Boxes*. Courageous, because as Mr Mason made clear in his opening remarks his subject fell clearly within the remit of the decorative arts and thus could be considered to be at the very edge of the Society's areas of interest. But Mr Mason had been awarded with a very good attendance with nigh on 40 members of the Society present, and judging by the animated question session which followed the talk those who had come along were well pleased that they had done so.

In his introduction Mr Mason said that he considered these miniature painted boxes to be unique within 20th century art forms as they emerged early in the century and in his view had improved in quality and innovation throughout the century, and indeed were still doing so today. He would use his talk to demonstrate why he believed this, as well as putting the production of the miniatures in their historic and economic framework.

Mr Mason explained that production of these boxes was concentrated on four small Russian communities. Three of these communities had been icon production centres. They had been devastated when the 1917 Russian Revolution abolished formal religions, including Orthodox Christianity. The fourth community, called Fedoskino, had been the centre in the 19th century for production of Lukutinsky ware, what in

the UK might be called treen. Amongst the items they turned out were snuff boxes, cigarette cases and tea caddies.

These two historic crafts were brought together because one man, Ivan Golikov, a former icon painter, saw an exhibition of pieces made in Fedoskino. He knew his colleagues, the former icon painters, could produce as good work as was coming from Fedoskino if they had the expertise to make the papier mache boxes on which the miniatures were being painted. The Fedoskino cooperative was willing to give support in the training required, and in a few years there were the four centres of production.

Mr Mason said that it had been 1922 when Golikov had seen the Lukutinsky ware. He was able to show illustrations from 1934 of masterpieces which stood comparison with anything from later in the century. Within these 12 years the icon painters had retrained themselves to master their new craft.

Mr Mason explained how the papier mache boxes were made. He said that one of the developments that had thrilled him over the last 20 years was that the box makers had grown in confidence that their work was a decorative art form in its own right. As a result innovative and amusing shapes of boxes had emerged – while still carrying very high quality miniature paintings. Mr Mason illustrated this with boxes in the shape of a cello and of a fish.

In discussing the artists' techniques, Mr Mason made it clear that the appearance of pictures on the miniature boxes can be quite different. The former icon painters work in egg tempera whereas the Fedoskino cooperative, coming from treen, have always worked in oils.

This has also led to differences in the themes which are painted in the four villages.

Fedoskino produces portraits, landscapes and copies of famous large oil paintings to a degree that is not matched in the other villages.

Ivan Golikov got his colleagues to paint themes from Russian fairy tales, particularly as written down by Alexander Pushkin. The fairy tales still form the core output from the other three villages.

A unique presentational aspect of the fairy tales, brought forward from the icon tradition is showing many aspects of the same story as miniatures within the miniature. Mr Mason illustrated this in detail with specific reference to Pushkin's text in his introduction to "Ruslan and Ludmilla".

Other common themes for paintings are folk customs and there was up to the demise of the USSR what might be called a propaganda stream of paintings though in Mr Mason's phrase this 'was never strident'.

Although this note is mostly a summary of the history of the production centres as given by Mr Mason and has mentioned the painterly techniques involved, Mr Mason's presentation was really a glorious picture show revelling in what artists from these four villages have achieved.

The technical sections were lightened by many appropriate illustrations. The second half of the presentation was Mr Mason showing pictures of the finest of the boxes which it has been his privilege to have seen over the last twenty years. In so doing he commented on the changed economic environment for both the artists and potential buyers of their work since the removal of central State control in 1989.

But the memories that those who attended this talk took away at the end of the evening were the astonishing degree of fineness in the miniatures, and the richness and depth of colour shining out from each picture.

Cairns Mason

The Stirling Heads **John Donaldson, Woodcarver.**

On Monday 25th October 2010 we had a return visit from John Donaldson, Woodcarver “extraordinaire”, the person delegated by Historic Scotland to replicate the Stirling Heads, part of the refurbishment of the Royal Apartments at Stirling Castle. An excellent turnout of forty plus members was much appreciated.

John began his presentation with a resumé of the project at Stirling Castle and how he became a self -taught wood carver quite late in life.

The Heads originated around 1540 when James V and his wife Mary of Guise built the Royal Apartments. The original heads or medallions were part of the ceiling decor in the Kings Inner Hall, the place where the King met dignitaries from afar. It was reckoned that the apartments were the finest in Europe at that time. The Heads were made of solid oak and beautifully carved with an array of figures; Kings and Queens , Classical Heroes to Imps and a Court Jester. They were the work of three men, the leading carver was French and the other two men were local. John says there are some discrepancies in some of the designs and it possible to see the difference in the skills between the three carvers. I suppose it will take an expert to discover that.

Historic Scotland had a dendrochronology test on the Heads dating them to 1530 – 1540 from trees felled in Poland. It is assumed they were cut as part of the construction project. John’s theory is that some of the timber came from barrels, as the length constitutes barrel size. He could be right as barrels were the pallets of the day in the 16th Century.

John had a real challenge on his hands as the Heads are highly individual and expressive. The carving is very intricate especially where the hair is concerned, as many of the characters had very curly hairdos. Two of the heads are purportedly of Margaret Tudor and

James V; John has called into doubt the wisdom of this; he thinks the expression on the faces seem to bear a different representation.

In his presentation of the slides John showed a number of the Heads he had carved himself, explaining the intricacies of using the gavel, chisels and gouges to complete the picture, also the art of holding the chisel /gouge in a way that it works with the grain of the wood. Oak can be quite difficult to work with. He has tried to make the heads as near as possible to the originals but admits to a bit of poetic licence.

There were 34 of the original heads found, two were known to have been destroyed by fire, six are composites, patched from various sources to complete the Heads. Luckily there was a drawing of the two destroyed by fire and he was able to work from the copy. Thirty seven heads were commissioned for the ceiling and four for display and spares. John was given permission by Historic Scotland to carve his daughters' faces as two of the Heads.

One of the most important discoveries of the project was that the border of one of the Heads had a series of numbers in sequence carved around it, 0's, 1's, 11's. This set the Carver thinking and with some deliberation he came to the conclusion that it could represent musical notes. A computerised recording was made with the help of his son, who plays guitar, and from a Lecturer in Early Scottish Music. Other help came from as far away as Wales, where something similar has been found in early Welsh Harp music. After various other challenges, pieces of music were unravelled and deciphered. Not a musical score as such, more an improvisation the same as modern jazz and blues musicians perform. The finishing touch was a rendition of the music from the Head.

What a marvellous talk and well appreciated by the audience.

Jack Archibald.

Port of Alloa Customs

Dr Eric Graham paid us another visit on **8th November 2010**, this time to give us a talk on the Customs Service, stationed at Alloa in the 18th Century.

He commenced with the little known Jacobite Rebellion of 1706, when there were French Men of War in the Forth Estuary, this however turned out to be a damp squib as nothing became of it.

It did hasten the Act of Union in 1707, with the union of parliaments helped along with the assistance of Queen Anne and some of the Scottish nobility who had lost a lot of money in the Darien fiasco of 1699. Of course, there was another person involved previously to that, in the name of William Paterson, a Scotsman who was one of the founders of the Bank of England, and the brains behind the Darien Adventure.

Anyway, with the “Act of Union” in which Scotland did rather well keeping our own legal and education system and so on, not forgetting the amount of recompense the nobility pocketed by it.

Trade in Scotland had picked up and a serious amount of revenue was being lost to the British by non payment of duties and other dubious practises. Sir Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and his Scottish side kick, a person named Godolphin, decided to establish a customs service covering the smaller ports. A Customs House was established at Alloa with two subsidiary ports, namely Airth and Elphinstone. The area covered was known as a precinct. Dr Graham showed us a map of the higher reaches of the Forth determining the different Precincts.

In those days you had to be a brave man to be a customs officer, trying to capture smugglers and stop ship masters with an eye on defrauding the government of the duties. There were various ways of outdoing the

Customs Officers. It was reckoned that in the early days about half the revenue was lost.

Around 1707 there were 18 ships in the Alloa Precinct, by 1724 the number had risen to 55. The main cargoes were coal and salt throughout the year, but in the winter the tobacco trade from America was to Glasgow, then across country to Alloa, loaded on to ships for onward journey to the continent, mainly Holland, Germany and Denmark. This was a very lucrative business, as it was reckoned the journey around the north of Scotland was too dangerous at that time of year.

The ships used in that era were quite small, mainly fifty tons burden. They were mainly Master Owned. One ship that was mentioned outwith that parameter was named the “The Robert”, of 300 tons and was owned by a consortium. “The Robert” did not just ply the Alloa/Continental route as it was known to have crossed the Atlantic.

Another piece of information was that the records of the Scottish Ports are the most comprehensive in Europe dating back to the early 17th Century, so much so that students from the Continent come to study the archives of the Scottish Ports.

This was a subject that Dr Graham is very passionate about, and it was very informative.

Jack Archibald.

ALEXANDER CRAWFORD LAMB FSA. Scot
HOTELIER AND ANTIQUARIAN.

Born Dundee 21/12/1843 Died London 29/4/1897



On **22nd November 2010**, a good turnout of members attended a very full and detailed talk about Alexander Crawford Lamb FSA, Scot., the man who laid the foundations of what is known about the fabric of early Dundee.

The speaker, Mr. John W. Irvine FSA, Scot., gave a wide-ranging description of Lamb's life, work and times, starting several generations before the birth of his subject. Alexander Crawford Lamb's grandfather and great uncle established themselves as weavers in what is still known as Lamb's Lane. The family forged early links with the Temperance Movement and the Hotel Trade, mainly through marriage.

However, Thomas Lamb, the father of Alexander C Lamb, embraced the temperance movement after attending a Public Meeting in Dundee. Together with his wife, they promptly disposed of all the alcohol stocked by their grocery business, by pouring it down the drain!

Alexander C Lamb received a High School education and took over running Lambs Temperance Hotel on the death of its founder, his father.

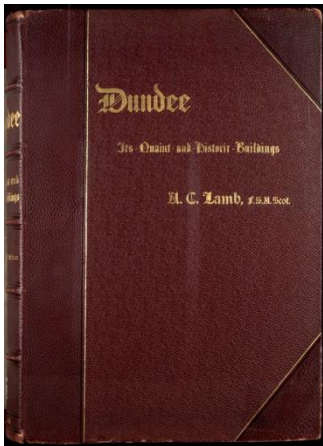
He was associated with many Arts and Antiquarian Societies in Scotland, including:

Scottish Society of Antiquities
New Galleries fine arts committee, Dundee.
Graphic Arts Association.
Edinburgh Bibliography Society.
Burns Society of Dundee.
Sec, Liberal Association.
Dundee Temperance Society.
JP in Dundee.

Alexander Lamb had a strong urge to “collect” and he had the means to indulge it. Items in his “Collection”, that is items additional to his “Dundee Collection”, included coins, rare china, porcelain, flint implements, ivory, art and articles about Robert Burns, Scott and Shakespeare. After his death, one of his Burns books fetched £572 at auction, a record for that time. This indicates the general value of items in the “Collection”.

THE “DUNDEE COLLECTION”.

No expense was spared in acquiring items for the “Dundee Collection”, which included books, manuscripts, coins, pictures and relics of anything to do with Dundee. It included etchings made in 1678, by Capt John Slezer.



Books made up a great part of the “Dundee Collection”, composed of:

Books by Dundee authors
Books about Dundee.
Books printed in Dundee
Books published in Dundee
Books which refer to Dundee,
And a Collection of Charters, Title deeds and Sasines dating from the 1500s.

On his death the Dundee Collection was purchased by Edward Cox MA, who gifted it to the people of Dundee. It is housed by Dundee City Council at the Local History Library, Dundee.

“DUNDEE; ITS QUAIN AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS”

In 1871, Lamb became concerned that, under the Police Improvement Act, many of Dundee’s old buildings were likely to be demolished.

To record the changes being made, Lamb produced this publication, a mammoth task in which he was aided by an “ad hoc” committee. It included detailed histories as well as drawings and information about the buildings being lost. This remarkable volume, as first published, weighed no less than 3 stones. A truly remarkable piece of work!

This is what he is chiefly famous for, although he must have been a worthy, public spirited and kindly man. It is related that, when William McGonagall, Scotland’s worst poet, was stranded in New York, A.C. Lamb generously paid for his passage home.

Our speaker, Mr. Irvine, brought all of this out and more.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Betty Roy.

Extracts from an article by John W. Irvine FSA Scot

Mining Evidences in the west of Fife

10th January 2011

Mr David Reid of the Fife Mining Heritage Preservation Society gave the first talk of the year to a brave audience who battled the icy conditions to be there.

Beginning with a resume of the history of the Society and how it was founded in 1995, he then went on to describe the subject of the talk, "Mining Evidences in Fife".

Almost out of Fife was the cemetery in Kincardine with two stones in memory of miners of the past, one with a carved replica of a miner's survey level. These stones are dated 1776 and 1799 respectively.

It was then on to Culross and an insight into the miners' convalescent home, totally funded by the National Union of Mineworkers. It looked quite a place in the slides shown.

We then went on to Preston Island between Culross and Valleyfield and a presentation of slides showing the workings of one of the first industrial developments in Scotland, founded by Sir Robert Preston in 1800. Remains of some of the buildings are still there. Looking back at a previous Newsletter, C.F.S.S. visited there in 2005. A guided tour was given by the Fife Ranger Service. Transport was provided by Scottish Power who now own the Island. Of course it is not an island now, as a lot of land reclamation has been done in that area using the Fly Ash from Longannet Power Station. To use the proper term, Pulverised Fuel Ash.

Just along the road was Valleyfield, scene of a memorial to a mining disaster in times gone by. On a lighter note, we were told of a game of Quoits and the local champion, a much favoured sport by the miners. Limekilns was mentioned in the passing and its association with the Mining Industry, due to the coal being used in lime production.

It was then further inland to Blairhall. The Miners' Memorials there incorporate tools, safety lamp etc., not forgetting the Miners' check, a metal disc normally with a number, which he would collect on going down the pit and hand back when he came back off his shift. The most important part of the Miner's day.

Going back to Valleyfield; it was one of the first places to have a Miners' Institute to benefit the Miners' recreational needs.

We were shown Memorials in Kelty and Lochore, one being the winding gear and accessories relevant to a pit head. This is different, as it is down in reinforced concrete, quite impressive.

Another point raised was the Gothenberg Hotels, one in Kelty and one in Lochgelly. Built for the benefits of the Miners, profits went to help the building of the Miners' Institutes. There were also Gala Days organized by the various towns and villages of the Fife Area.

David also covered disasters in the Mining Industry, mainly the Lindsay Colliery in the Kelty area. Another fascinating feature of the area was the erection of Totem Poles in the Lochore, Kelty and Blairadam areas. These are authentic American Indian work which came about by exchanges of a cultural nature and visits, mostly from the Vancouver area. They were produced in the time honoured tradition, all hand carved with no chainsaws used.

Various topics were the price of Miners Checks sold on E-Bay and statues carved in Scottish Coal. The use of Canaries in search of gas in the mines, the introduction of The Davey Safety Lamp and how a Carbide Lamp works. What used to intrigue me when I was young, was miners using their Carbide Lamps on their bicycles.

This was a very interesting and fruitful talk about the Mining Industry.

Jack Archibald

**The Great Michael – Airth,
The Lost Dock of James IV . Poberth.**

**A talk, by John Reid, Falkirk History Society,
on Monday 24th January, 2011.**

A capacity audience was given an enthralling talk by John, on his investigations and history of a plot of land just up river from the new Upper Forth Crossing, (Clackmannanshire Bridge), on the south bank of the river.

He began with a letter from William Wallace and Andrew Murray dated 1297, after the Battle of Stirling Bridge. It informed their trading partners on the Continent that Scotland was ready to do business with them again.

Transcript

Andrew Murray and William Wallace, leaders of the army of the kingdom of Scotland and the community, to their worthy and beloved friends, the mayors and citizens of Lubeck and Hamburg, greeting.

We have been told by trustworthy merchants of the kingdom of Scotland that you are giving help and favour in all business concerning us and our merchants for which we thank you. We ask that it be made known among your merchants that they will now have safe access to all our ports in the kingdom of Scotland, since Scotland, blessed be God, has been rescued from the power of the English by force of arms.

Given at Haddington in Scotland on the 11th day of October in the year of grace one thousand two hundred and ninety seven.

The Lubeck Letter is the only original surviving document issued by Wallace. Written in Latin, it bears an impression of his own seal.

In 1457 the Bishop of St Andrews owned a caravel with a displacement of 120 tonnes and a number of barges, one of 500 tonnes burden. Of course there was a problem of pirates who preyed on the merchantmen which added to the problems of plying their trade. The pirates came from various countries but seemingly the biggest offenders were the English, one of those being Admiral Howard, who sailed an English Fleet right up the River Forth. As there was no Scottish Navy as such, they sailed on with impunity.

James III of Scotland married Margaret of Denmark, daughter of Christian I, a condition of the marriage being that Scotland could be called to assist Denmark in times of need. This never happened as Scotland never possessed the ships to transfer an army overseas.

During a revolt by the nobles, James III was murdered after the Battle of Sauchie Burn. His son, now James IV, was said to be implicated in this sordid affair. However, James IV was an intelligent and well educated man. One of his first decisions was the creation of a Scots Navy. Having no shipbuilders capable of building naval ships, he approached Louis XII of France quoting the Auld Alliance, and a number of ship builders headed for Scotland.

One of the first ships to be built was the Margaret, a 21 gun Caravel. It is said that a thousand oak trees were used in its construction. One of the most iconic ships built for James IV's navy was The Great Michael. But where was it built?

After considerable research the main structure was built at Newhaven near Leith, where a few ships had been built in the past. For the construction of The Great Michael a considerable amount of work had to be done in the case of harbour installations, including houses for the workers and there is evidence of a church. In fact, there was a whole village surrounding the docks.

For reasons of security only the hull was built there, knowing what had happened in the past. The site was very open and raiders had the width of the Forth Estuary to manoeuvre. So therefore a more secure site was sought.

Research shows that a dock was built at Poberth and that was an ideal site for fitting out vessels due to the tides and sand bars in that area of the Forth. Local knowledge was an excellent defence against any unwanted raider. There was also a few castles in the area, another means of defence. Referring back to the tides, there is a rise and fall of 4 to 5 metres and is something similar to the Severn Bore.

John, during his research, had great difficulty in finding the owners of the land at that time as no documents of land sales or title deeds came to light. Continuing research, he discovered that the property was on the Bothkenar Estate, owned by the Crown.

There must have been a lot of excavations required for the building of the docks, and the driving of piles so the dock walls could be built. An ingenious method was to have a double row of piles with clay in between. This clay came from the excavations and gave a watertight seal. John described the surrounding area and the different materials available locally which could be used in boat building and dock construction, involving as little transportation as possible. No date was given as to when shipbuilding ceased at Poberth, but John went on to describe more of the landscape in the area and how there was a corn mill there at a later date. There was an ingenious way of operating the machinery of the mill using a water turbine and to get water into a reservoir filled by the tide and the nearby Pow Burn. Using a number of sketches and an array of photographs he described the survey he had done to locate the Dock and channels dug to supply the water turbine. Fascinating stuff! It must have been time consuming. Also, there was a problem, as the river bank had changed course over the years. Remember it was five hundred years ago! Finally, in photographs from

the new bridge looking up river, we saw what looked like piles sticking out of the mud. Were they the original piles of the King James IV Dock?

A fascinating talk by John, so full of information on a very important period in Scottish History, culminating in the death of James IV and the death of more than one third of the Scottish Army at Flodden in 1513.

Jack Archibald

Arnsbrae Estate

A visit to Arnsbrae Estate on the 14th July 2010

A talk given on the 14th February 2011

Susan Mills has combined both these events into one report.

On 14th July 2010 a group of 15 members visited the Arnsbrae estate between Alloa and Cambus. It must have been one of the wettest evenings of the year, a torrential downpour starting just as people arrived, but nonetheless everyone followed me stoically up the hill to view the ‘big house’ and the rest of the demesne. It was difficult in those conditions, however, to ‘set the scene’, so here is a brief background to the Youngers, erstwhile owners of Arnsbrae and a prime example of a family who rose from fairly humble origins in the later 18th century to become, like the Patons, one of the new grandes of Clackmannanshire.

The Youngers were originally from Clackmannan, then were salters in Culross, but later moved to Alloa, where George Younger (1722-1788) was born, the first member of the family to be mentioned as a brewer. In 1762 he acquired a malt kiln and two years later an adjoining property in Bank Street/Union Street from the brewer Robert Stein. There he established the Meadow Brewery. From this small beginning, George Younger & Son was to be an important part of the industrial landscape of Alloa for the next two centuries.

In 1852, the family leased Candleriggs Brewery from Robert Meiklejohn & Sons, buying it outright in 1871. In 1877 brewing ceased

at the Meadow Brewery and it became the company offices. The business went from strength to strength, establishing its own maltings at Craigward and Ward Street and a bottling plant at Kelliebank. James Younger (1818-1868) inherited the brewery in 1853, developed it into a flourishing business and, like many other rising entrepreneurs in Alloa, moved out of the old centre of the town. He built Bedford House in 1858, which the family owned until 1947 and which has now been carefully restored. He was an active member of the Alloa community - a magistrate and one of the first Burgh Commissioners in 1854, as well as being involved in many other county enterprises – and evidently well liked and respected. He and his wife Janet, nee McEwan (1823-1912) had six children. He died suddenly in August 1868, leaving his eldest son George (1851–1929) to start running the brewery at the tender age of 17, instead of going to university. He too became a successful businessman, Chief Magistrate of Alloa and an MP, becoming 1st Viscount Younger of Leckie in 1923. His descendants included George, 4th Viscount Younger (1931 – 2003), who served in the last Conservative government.

So what of Arnsbrae? The estate, which was just an area of woodland until the early 1880s, was acquired for James Younger (1856–1946), third son of James and Janet Younger, and his fiancée Annie Thomson Paton (1864-1942), only child of John and Graeme Thomson Paton, who lived at Norwood, an impressive neo-Gothic mansion built in 1874 and less than half a mile away. It seems very likely that it was Thomson Paton, Managing Director of John Paton, Son & Co. and by then a very wealthy man, who paid for the grand new home for the young couple, though the Youngers probably also contributed.

Arnsbrae was designed by Alfred Waterhouse RA (1830-1905), the eminent and prolific Liverpool-born architect, perhaps the most successful Victorian architect of all, who had just made his name with the design for the Natural History Museum in London. How John Thomson Paton met him is unknown, but the commission marked his departure from the use of Alloa architects John Melvin & Son, who had designed all of the Paton's mill buildings, as well as his uncle's,

Alexander Paton, house at Cowdenpark and his own home of Norwood. The Arnsbrae commission may have been a 'trial run' for Alloa Town Hall, which Alfred Waterhouse also designed with his son Paul (1861-1934) at the same time. Whatever the case, it was quite a *coup* to obtain the services of such a distinguished architect.

Notice that the new house was to be built was given in the *Alloa Journal* in September 1884 and work must have proceeded apace in 1885 since, in spite of a severe winter, the young couple, who married on 18th February 1886, took up residence in the completed Arts & Crafts style mansion in the first week of May that year. An enthusiastic and detailed description of the new house appeared in the *Alloa Advertiser* on 1st May, the reporter having received a guided tour from the Clerk of Works:-

“It is not too much to say that for beauty of situation Arnsbrae House occupies an enviable position, and one second to no other similar mansion in the county, while in point of hygienics the situation could not be surpassed....The exterior is, perhaps, rather plain and severe-looking for the aesthetic tastes of the present day, but a leading feature is the artistic and effective appearance of the interior of the mansion which...is two stories in height, with basement and attics....”

The Arnsbrae estate was impressive, consisting originally of the mansion, which had five large, oak-floored rooms on the ground floor, as well as the kitchen and pantry, seven bedrooms, dressing rooms, bathroom and other rooms on the first floor, and servants' accommodation in the attics; a wash house, laundry and drying closet in separate buildings behind the house; a conservatory to the west of the mansion; a coach house and stables to the south-west and a "*neat porter lodge... at the entrance to the grounds*". The stone for all of the buildings came from Devon Quarry. Everything was finished to the highest possible standard. The problem of obtaining a water supply for the mansion was solved by pumping water from a spring to the north-east of the lodge uphill by means of a gas engine! The extensive terraced garden, kitchen garden and grounds were laid out and a drainage system was put in place. In 1895 an artificial curling pond was

built on a flat area of ground to the west of the mansion and competitions were held there. James and Annie Younger also held annual supper dances for their staff, usually around Christmas or New Year.

The Youngers' first child, Mary Graeme, was born in 1889; in 1891 they had six live-in female servants, as well as a butler, who lived in the lodge with his wife and two daughters, and a coachman, who occupied the coach house/stables with his wife, two daughters and the groom who lodged with them. James Paton Younger was born on 19th June 1891 and a second daughter, Dorothy Janet, on 14th November 1892. By 1901 the mansion had been extended considerably, to the designs of Paul Waterhouse, to the north and west and the conservatory was now connected to the house. The household had also increased dramatically in number: besides the five Youngers, there were no less than *eighteen* servants, including a governess and the butler, this time a single man; the gardener and his family were living in the lodge by then. It is surprising, then, that James Younger was already in the process of building another home!

Mount Melville was an 18th century house near St Andrews once owned by General Robert Melville, Governor of Grenada, who invented the 'carronade', a short-barrelled ship's cannon which was manufactured by the Carron Iron Company of Falkirk. James Younger bought the estate and commissioned Paul Waterhouse to design a grand new mansion to replace the old house. It had some similarities to Arnsbrae, but was larger and more elaborate, with echoes of Scots Renaissance architecture. It was completed in 1903 and the family appear to have made it their main residence, though they still spent time at Arnsbrae. James and Annie Younger celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in February 1911, the occasion for which a remarkable silver candlestick, incorporating a 3D model of Arnsbrae in its original form, was commissioned, presumably as a gift (it is now in the Museum collection). Their daughter Mary was married in November of the same year. In 1917 James Younger was given an honorary doctorate by the

University of St Andrews: he and his wife maintained a close connection with the university, donating the Younger Hall there in 1929.

As the family now occupied Arnsbrae only intermittently, in 1915 they placed it at the disposal of the War Office and it became an Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital for the duration of the First World War. The house accommodated fifteen wards, with a total of fifty beds, as well as rooms for nursing staff, a surgery and recreation facilities. It was used throughout the war; subscriptions, gifts-in-kind and fund-raising events such as concerts and pageants all ensured that it ran successfully. The last patient (one of 1,396 treated there) left on 15th January 1919 and Arnsbrae became a home once more.

The connection with the Waterhouse family had obviously been maintained socially, as on 30th April 1921 Captain James Paton Younger (1891-1974) married Rachel Howard Waterhouse (1895-1987), daughter of the architect Paul Waterhouse. His parents gave them Arnsbrae as their home. The couple had four children - Mary Elizabeth (27. 3. 1922); James Andrew (26.10.1924); Robert ('Robin') Paul (20.8.1928) and Stephen John (27.12.1931). They all grew up at Arnsbrae and all but Andrew are still alive and have children and grandchildren of their own. Captain Younger, a tall, distinctive figure who always wore a monocle, worked in the family brewery and, like his ancestors, played a significant part in the civic life of the county; he became the Baillie of Alloa in 1928 and was also Provost of Alloa Burgh Council (1932-1938). His parents, meanwhile, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in February 1936 and were photographed in the library at Mount Melville. Annie Younger died in August 1942 and Dr James Younger died in November 1946 at the age of almost 91. Captain Younger became Sir James Younger in June 1961; he was Lord Lieutenant of Clackmannanshire from 1955-1966. Robin Younger was encouraged to become an architect like his grandfather and great-grandfather, while Stephen returned from university in 1956 to work in the brewery, moving to Edinburgh in 1960 when it became part of Caledonian Breweries Ltd. Although George Younger & Son had survived the difficult years of the early 20th century, its days were

numbered - Candleriggs Brewery, the oldest one in the county, closed on 31st December 1963.

By the 1970s Sir James and Lady Younger had decided to 'downsize' and were in the process of having a smaller home built at Braehead when he died suddenly on 17th September 1974. The Arnsbrae estate was sold, Lady Younger lived in Braehead House once it was finished (she donated her beautiful doll's house, designed by her father in 1901 as a 6th birthday present, to the Museum collection in 1974), before moving into a nursing home in the south of England, where she died in February 1987.

What happened to Arnsbrae? The large extension was demolished, the mansion returned almost to its original size and cleverly divided into three apartments, preserving several of the principal rooms - the former dining room, for instance, survives intact as the drawing room of the rear apartment. The front garden is divided in two at the west end. The summer house built in the early 1900s is still there and provided a very welcome shelter from the monsoon during our tour last July. The former laundry was converted and extended into a house, but the drying closet, a curious structure with its louvered sides, remains. The coach house and stables were converted into two dwellings, while next to them is a more modern building which used to house the electricity generating plant for the estate. The lodge is still, as it always was, a home; there are now eight properties at Arnsbrae, where once there were just three.

Last July our bedraggled group finally escaped from the rain when Nick Bell and Joyce Kitching invited us into the former coach house, where we enjoyed much needed refreshments and cakes baked by Joyce and Sybil Taylor, who lives in the former laundry. I am extremely grateful to my kind neighbours for their support and hospitality, which made our tour of Arnsbrae memorable in spite of the rain.

Susan Mills, Arnsbrae Lodge, 8th April 2011

Robert Burns and Scotland's Industrial Heritage
Illustrated Talk to CFSS on Monday 28th February by
Dr Catherine P Smith BSc MSc PhD FCIBS FRSA

Dr Catherine Smith told CFSS that, while poet Robert Burns is seldom linked in people's minds with the Industrial Revolution, in today's world of credit crunches, economic trauma, volcanic dust and political upheaval, we can gain a lot from understanding his life and writings.

Burns is often thought of as someone who "went saft over a wee mouse" – but the reality is very different: in particular, the mouse showed him that new technology can – and often does – have unintended consequences. To develop her very different view of Burns, Catherine applied her wide career experience of change management with her awareness of the difficulty the modern world faces when reading his works. She demonstrated that Burns typically gets misinterpreted: not only is his language often obscure, but even his poems in English can be misunderstood if read only with reference to 21st century paradigms. In addition, his scientific education is typically overlooked by biographers, despite the degree to which it influenced his outlook on life and informed his works.

His relevance today is particularly strong because his personal life experiences are mirrored in modern times. He lived through very difficult times – but times like the present in very direct ways. In his day as in ours, young people found it very difficult to get worthwhile work while everyone needed to fear that technology and economic difficulties would make their skills obsolete. Faced with difficulties more extreme than those facing people today, he used his mind and his initiative – but always with integrity and concern for all Humanity – to raise himself out of despair to triumph.

Summarising her recent biography, 'The Stars of Robert Burns' (Published by www.circlepublications.com), Catherine explained the challenges of economic hardship and health disabilities Burns overcame. He conceived a vision that he must work to "preserve the Dignity of Man". His early life lived in extreme poverty, after his poetry was

recognised he travelled Scotland to understand how to fulfil this goal. His ability to forecast how situations pan out made him realise that the incipient Industrial Revolution was causing people to be thrown on the scrap heap and was killing the music that had been integral in their daily tasks. With the death of music, the remaining self-respect of displaced people, even those who got jobs, was being obliterated. So he strove to preserve and develop Scottish song and cause it to be made available, at minimal cost, to the widest possible audience. This left to the whole world heart-warming, inspiring songs. He believed these would live in people's hearts to uplift them in adversity.

In this he was proved right. When in adversity, Scotland has turned to his writings and found them uplifting. Comparing today's situation with the economic circumstances of the time of Burns using the poet's own written evidence, the situation in 1934 of Ayrshire struggling to come out of the Great Depression, and an incident from the Clydebank Blitz in the Second World War, Catherine showed how the life of Burns and his legacy are, properly understood, very relevant to Humanity in the face of current global economic and political trauma.

Cairns Mason

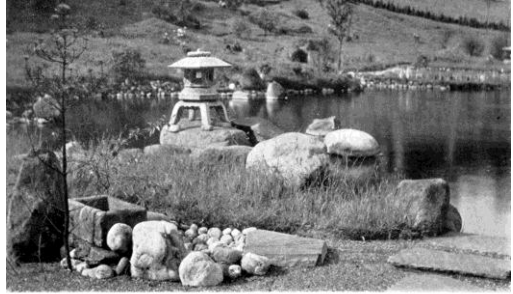
The Travels of Ella Christie and the Creation of the Japanese Garden at Cowden

On Monday 14th March Sir Robert Stewart gave an excellent talk about his great-aunt Ella Christie's travels and her Japanese Garden. The venue was the hi-tech assembly hall at the new Alloa Academy but unfortunately no sound system was available and some of the audience had difficulty hearing the speaker.

The talk was illustrated by a PowerPoint slideshow researched and put together by Janet Carolan.

Ella's father, John Christie, bought the Cowden Estate, between Dollar and Muckhart, in 1865. His wealth came from coal mining and his wife's from gunpowder manufacturing. They had three children: John, who died young, Ella born in 1861, and Alice, born in 1863. The girls were

educated by governesses and learned French and German from an early age. They also travelled with their parents to the Continent every year.



R. K. Holmes.

"SNOW-SCENE" LANTERN AND STONE BASIN.

John Christie extended Cowden Castle and planted trees extensively. However, after he developed pernicious anaemia in 1887, his personality changed. He became secretive and hostile to his family. When he died in 1902 he left everything to charity, in particular to orphanages for girls. Alice (Sir Robert's grandmother) had married Robert Stewart and lived at Murdostoun Castle, but Ella, who never

married, would have lost her home and income, so the sisters challenged the will. It was a sensational case and in 1904 they won back much of their father's estate. To celebrate keeping Cowden, Ella set off on her first major foreign tour.



*Ella Christie in her Japanese Garden, Perthshire, 1934.
Reproduced by kind permission of Robert Stewart.*



R. K. Holmes.

HAND-WASHING FOUNTAIN, STEPPING-STONES, AND "KASUGA" LANTERN.

During 1904-5 she travelled to India, Ceylon, Burma, Sarawak and Borneo. She enjoyed luxury as the guest of maharajahs and governors but she also underwent great hardships travelling, without her maid, in the Himalayas – in Kashmir, Baltistan and Ladakh (known as Little Tibet). She trekked over high passes on pony or yak, crossed rivers on precarious

bridges or goatskin rafts and walked on dangerous mountain paths, sometimes only a foot or two wide with dramatic drops to the valley below. At Khapalu (altitude 10,000 feet) she was by chance present at a gathering of local tribes held only every 35 years. One other foreigner was present: another Scotswoman, Jane Duncan, who was also an intrepid traveller. The two women enjoyed their meeting but after a few days went their separate ways, preferring to travel independently.

In 1907 she set off again, this time sailing to Hong Kong and then on to Shanghai, Nanking, Peking, Port Arthur, Seoul, Kyoto and Tokyo, returning on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Her maid Humphries was seriously injured in Korea and in fact died on the way home, in Paris. Ella was very impressed by Japan and in particular by the gardens she visited. She decided to create a Japanese garden at Cowden.

On arriving home she immediately had a marshy piece of land dammed to create a lake and employed a Japanese woman landscape gardener to design the new garden – Taki Honda. Lanterns and plants were sent from Japan and local craftsmen constructed teahouses, bridges and gates. Islands were made and many special stones were placed in symbolic groups. The garden was called Shah-rak-uen, the place of delight. A shrine was built to the god who brought rice to Japan. Its

doors were flanked by red foxes with golden balls in their mouths and when you opened the door you saw your reflection in a bronze mirror.

Early photos show the garden to have taken shape very quickly although the trees and shrubs were still immature. Many friends, including famous people like Andrew Lang, began to visit the garden.

In 1910 Ella made her first trip to Central Asia. From Istanbul she travelled to Ashkabad, Merv, Bokhara, Samarkand, Andijan, Tashkent and home via Moscow, which she reached by sailing up the Volga. In 1912 she went via St Petersburg to Turkestan: Tashkent, Bokhara, Chardzou, steamer down the Oxus to Novo Urgentsch and on by boat and droshky to Khiva (1st European woman there). In 1913 Ella was very proud to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. She continued to travel all her life, visiting America and every European country apart from Ireland.

During the 1st World War Ella took a group of women to France, where they ran a canteen for injured soldiers. She also delivered lectures on her travels to raise funds for the Red Cross. After the War she continued to develop her Japanese garden. Matsuo, who had lost his family in an earthquake, was employed as gardener from 1925 to 1937. He and Ella Christie managed to communicate although Matsuo's English was very limited. He often wore Japanese dress on shopping trips to local villages and was sometimes believed to be the Japanese Emperor making an incognito visit.

A professional gardener, J. Suzuki, paid regular visits to advise on improvements and to carry out pruning. He persuaded Ella to put in a Yatsunashi or zigzag bridge to the Outlying Island. He later told her that hers was the best Japanese garden in the Western World. The garden was now at its peak and had many high-profile visitors, including Queen Mary.

Sir Robert said that Ella walked from Cowden Castle to the Garden every day and he recalled frequent family picnics and tea-parties in the

tea-houses. For him it was – and still is – a magic place. Ella was a wonderful person and a most interesting conversationalist.

In 1937 Matsuo died and was buried in Muckhart kirkyard. During the 2nd World War Ella was busy with the Red Cross and the garden received less attention. Ella died in 1949. A few years later Cowden Castle was demolished. The Japanese Garden was opened to the public for the last time in 1955 when five beautiful colour slides were taken by Ian Campbell. Sadly the Garden was seriously vandalised in the early 1960's. The teahouses and bridges were burnt and lanterns and other items were broken or stolen.

Today few of the original features are evident. Sir Robert does not intend to restore the garden to its former glory but he is clearing the lake and has rebuilt a zigzag bridge to the island. It is still a beautiful place with a very special atmosphere.

Janet Carolan

**Old Logie Kirk Project.
Monday 28th March 2011**

Eleanor Young spoke about the conservation project at the Old Kirk at Logie. Following an enquiry from New Zealand about a gravestone in the Old Kirkyard, Eleanor and her husband Joe were shocked at the condition of the site, where ivy was so overgrown that stones could not be seen and serious structural damage was being caused to the 16th century ruin. Following a meeting with the Cemeteries Department they were told that there would not be money available for repairs and that the site would be locked for health and safety reasons unless a community group took an interest in the site and managed to raise funding for the repairs. After discussion Eleanor and Joe got together with some other interested people and Logie Old Graveyard Group was constituted with the aim of securing the future of the site.

Volunteers began ground work on site cutting back ivy and overgrown bushes and a photographic survey of the stones was begun. Following two years of difficulties, setbacks and miles of red tape, funding was secured from Heritage Lottery, Historic Scotland, LEADER and several other agencies. This was sufficient to allow the project to go ahead.

During 2010 the old watch hut was renovated with a new roof and a small interpretive centre was established on site. An interpretive panel was designed by a senior pupil from Wallace High School and a family history data base was set up for researchers. A leaflet about the site was prepared and published and plans were well ahead for work on the ruin. The whole project was on two steps forward and one back and just as the group was ready to have the contractor start work on the ruin the early snows of 2010 put a stop to the work yet again. Fortunately good weather followed from late January and through February and the contractor was able to race ahead. The bell tower was dismantled and rebuilt and all the cement pointing was raked out to be replaced with traditional lime mortar. Pins were put across the cracks left by the massive roots of ivy which had been removed and stabilizing brackets and bars were put in to hold the structure firmly in position. All gates were sent to Ballantines of Bo'ness for refurbishment. The construction work was completed by the end of March and the ruin has been well restored for future generations to enjoy. Members of the group are now busy repainting railings and tackling the cosmetic gardening work that is needed around the site before it officially reopens in June. The Cemeteries Department has started work to re-erect fallen stones and gravel will be laid inside the ruin during May. It has been a long slow project with endless frustrations but determination has got it done in the end. There are still small areas of work that the group would like to see done over the next few years, but the main part of the project is complete and these will be done little by little over the next two or three years.

In the meantime the site will be open on Sunday afternoons between 2.00pm and 5.00pm during July and August.

Eleanor Young