

west lothian heritage

Newsletter of West Lothian Heritage Services

Autumn 2014

A souvenir of a Scottish Flag Day in Linlithgow



In 2013 West Lothian Museums received a donation including this First World War souvenir postcard. Flag days were a big part of fundraising for the war effort locally and nationally but few souvenirs of them survive, so we were very pleased to receive the card.

Only three weeks earlier the ladies of the royal burgh had organised a Flower and Flag Day for the Belgian Relief Fund. That event raised the sum of over £154 to help feed and clothe Belgian refugees who had fled to Britain at short notice to escape the invading German troops.

On Saturday 4 December 1914 most of Scotland was involved in a National Flag Day. The aim was to provide a national fund for the purchase of comforts for Scottish regiments in the field. Unfortunately it was a terrible day of rain and

wind but the collectors were undeterred. As the Courier reported, 'It was impossible not to respond to the appeal of the ladies as they approached all and sundry to purchase from their stock of flags, flowers and souvenir cards, the latter containing photos of Lord Kitchener, Sir John French and Sir John Jellicoe, and nobody had any wish not to respond.'

A shop was set up at 71 High Street selling fruit, flowers, vegetables, poultry and other things in aid of the Flag Day and raised £32 of the final total of £102 8s 9d. Considering the number of appeals for subscriptions and donations from local people since the war broke out four months earlier, this total was regarded as 'splendid'.

And splendid it was. In today's money the event raised over four thousand pounds.

An Object of Remembrance

Only a month into the First World War, Sir Gawaine Baillie of Polkemmet lost his life, becoming one of the war's early casualties.

Sir Gawaine was 21 and had been serving as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Scots Greys. He was killed in action on 7 September 1914 after being led into a trap by German troops. Another two men were killed in this incident.

The death of the young baronet caused shockwaves throughout the community, as the impact of the war began to be truly realised.

At this early stage in the War, it was still permissible to repatriate bodies from France. In 1915, repatriation was prohibited to prevent inequality between the rich who could afford it, and the poor who could not.

Sir Gawaine's body was brought home and his ashes were laid to rest

in a mausoleum on the Polkemmet Estate, which was built by his mother and consecrated in 1915.

The brass plaque below was found by a metal detectorist at nearby Cowhill farm and we can surmise that it once adorned the mausoleum, showing clearly that it was intended as a lasting memorial to Sir Gawaine.

The young baronet had drawn up his will on 8 August, before going to France; he and his family must have realised what might happen to him.

The plaque now forms part of the council's museum collection and is currently on display at the community museum in Broxburn Library.



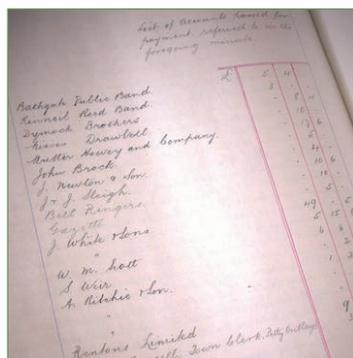
Museum venues Autumn / Winter opening times

Almond Valley Heritage Trust	Millfield, Livingston Village, Tel: 01506 414957. 7 days a week: 10am-5pm (except 25 & 26 Dec, 1 & 2 Jan) www.almondvalley.co.uk
Annet House Museum & Garden	143 High St, Linlithgow, Tel: 01506 670677. Mon to Sat 11am-5pm. Sun 1pm - 4pm. Closed 31 Oct - 1 Apr www.annethousemuseum.org.uk
Armada Library	North St, Armadale, Tel: 01501 282282. Mon to Fri: 9am-6pm, (8pm on Tues and Thurs) Sat: 9am-1pm www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries
Bennie Museum Trust	9-11 Mansefield St, Bathgate, Tel: 01506 634944. October to March: Mon - Sat: 11am - 3.30pm www.benniemuseum.org.uk
Blackridge Community Museum	Blackridge Library, Craig Inn Centre, Blackridge, Tel: 01501 752396 Tues: 2pm-6.30pm, Wed: 9.30am-12.30pm & 1.30pm-4.30pm, Thurs: 2pm-6.30pm www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries
Broxburn Library	West Main Street, Broxburn, Tel: 01506 775600. Mon to Fri: 10am-6pm, Sat: 9.30am-1pm www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries
Hopetoun House	Queensferry, Tel: 0131 331 2451. October - March. Open for special events throughout the winter. House visits for pre-booked groups (minimum 15) only www.hopetounhouse.com
Linlithgow Canal Centre & Museum	Canal Basin, Manse Rd, Linlithgow. Tel: 01506 671215 (answering service). Weekends until last weekend in September 1.30pm - 5pm. Closed until Easter 2015 www.lucs.org.uk
Linlithgow Library	The Vennel, Linlithgow, Tel: 01506 775490. Mon to Fri: 10am-5.30pm, Sat: 9.30am-1pm www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries
Whitburn Community Museum	Whitburn Library, Union Rd, Whitburn, Tel: 01501 678050. Mon to Fri 10am-5.30pm. Sat 9.30am-1pm www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries

Centenary of a Royal Visit

As events in Europe moved ever closer to war, preparations for a happy occasion in Linlithgow are revealed in the Town Council minutes.

'The Provost reported that he had received intimation ... that Their Majesties the King and Queen were to honour the Burgh by a visit on Saturday 11th July next ...' - Minutes of meeting of the Town Council of the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow, 14 April 1914. A Special Committee was appointed to 'attend to all necessary arrangements in connection with the Royal Visit', and the minutes of their meetings in June and July reveal these detailed preparations.



The Committee oversaw the construction of barricades to maintain public order and, in response to his request, granted the chief Constable the use of the Victoria Hall 'for the purpose of feeding the Police brought in to assist the local force'.

The Linlithgow Station and District Ambulance Society were provided with a Headquarters in the Masonic Hall and turned out four squads of four men each. The Committee agreed that the Magistrates robes should be sent to Messrs Pullar & Co. Ltd to be cleaned and repaired after the Marches Day and the Burgh Officer was authorised to obtain a new uniform from Mr George Anderson, tailor, Linlithgow.

The minutes state 'About Decorations, the Committee are of opinion that Their Majesties should be enabled to see the Town very much as it is, but that an appeal should be made to the General Public to decorate their houses in a simple tasteful fashion.' However, more work went into preparing other buildings in the

Burgh. The Council assisted with the cost of cleaning the Parish Church. Bailies Dymock and Wardrop organised the decoration of the Town Hall staircase, a task made easier by the loan of plants from Mr W.M. Richard of Clarendon and Mr William Dougall of Rockville, as well as the help of their gardeners. Flags of the Trade Incorporations in the Burgh were also displayed from the windows of the Town Hall.

©M. Thomson



This postcard by Robert Braid is something of a mystery. It's captioned 'Royal Visit', but dated 1911. A royal visit was indeed planned for 1911, but was cancelled. Perhaps the date on the postcard is just a mistake. Or had Robert Braid used a print of some previous festivity at the Cross and captioned it Royal Visit 1911 to cash in on expected demand, then was caught out when the visit was cancelled? At any rate, it gives a good idea of what might have been the scene during the 1914 royal visit.

Representatives of the Burgh were selected for presentation to their Majesties in the Parliament Hall of the Palace. Seats in the Hall were reserved for about 200 people with some official position in the County and Burgh, and the Committee agreed the order for the issue of tickets. Further spaces were allocated in the Ladies Gallery and a range of other locations including the Council Chambers, Burgh Court Room and even the South Windows in the Town Hall ('4 persons for each window')!

Arrangements were also made for the official press including the Glasgow News, the Linlithgowshire Gazette and West Lothian Courier, along with photographers including Mr Haddow of Lizars & Co., and Pathe's Animated Gazette.

On the day, the crowds greeting the Royal Party included more than 900 school children and their teachers from Linlithgow Public School and the Academy. The children were in their places in the Kirkgate and Palace Yard 'by 3 o'clock pm prompt'. They were presented with a commemorative medal by Mr and Mrs Hope of Bridgecastle and also given refreshments by Mr and Mrs Cadell of Grange. Entertainment was provided by Bathgate Public Prize Band in the Palace Yard and Kinneil Reed Band at

the Cross, with Mr Robert Cassels acting as Musical Director. In addition, town and church bells were rung.

Evidently, the event was 'a splendid success'. The minute of 16 July reads 'The Committee now beg to put on record the great satisfaction of the Community that the most welcome visit of their Majesties the King and Queen,

accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Mary, which took place on Saturday last, had enabled the Burgh to renew its old time association with the Royal Family, and to demonstrate again its ardent loyalty to the Throne.' The minutes also provide a detailed record of thanks from the Committee 'to one and all who in any way assisted in the successful carrying out of this memorable function.'



Tweets from the Home Front: @WW1WestLothian



As part of the First World War centenary, West Lothian Council Archives has created a real-time historical twitter feed which will offer a unique insight into life in West Lothian during the First World War.

The twitter feed was launched on the official centenary of the start of the war and will run for 4 years with the project end coinciding with the end of the war on the Western Front in 1918. The tweets will be based on local newspaper coverage and records from the council's archives.

In 2015, followers will be given a chance to glimpse beyond the home-front experience as the tweets draw in entries from Private Peter Jack's diary which was penned in 1915-1916.

Follow @WW1WestLothian and learn about West Lothian's war-time experience in real-time.

'Business as Usual...'

Although the outbreak of the First World War seems a momentous event to us, at the time most people in West Lothian just carried on with their everyday lives.

There was a brief panic about food prices, and the local Territorials were called up, but jobs had to be done, roads repaired and rates collected. The minutes of the local Councils show clearly how their mundane but essential work carried on almost as normal. However, the minutes do contain some hints of the effect the war was beginning to have even in these first few months.

In all the towns collections for the Prince of Wales Relief Fund were organised. This fund was announced by Prince Edward on 7 August, to provide assistance to the dependents of reservists called up to the Army. In the absence of any real official benefits system, these families, and many others suffering from sudden unemployment due to the war, had to rely on the generosity of other ordinary people. Within the first week the Fund had raised the equivalent of about £55 million. In Linlithgow a joint committee of the Parish and Town Councils was set up, and the

area was divided up into collection districts. The Town Council also voted to give a contribution of £10 (about £1000 today) from the Common Good Fund.

In Whitburn some of the local firms helped by collecting contributions from their employees and passing them on to the local Fund committee. However, the death in action of Sir Gawaine Baillie of Polkemmet seems to have come as a shock to the local area. He was one of the first officers killed in the war, and the Town Council sent an official letter of sympathy to Lady Baillie. He was the first of many local men whose names are recorded on the War Memorial.

As befitted the County Town, there was more activity in Linlithgow. The Halls Committee had a special meeting on 29 August to discuss the billeting of 50 soldiers in the Old Town Hall; the Hall was to be rented at five shillings per day, but the soldiers were to do all their own cleaning! The Council also granted

Minutes of Special Meeting of the
Borough of Armadale held within
the Town Hall, Armadale on
Monday 26th November 1914 at
6.30 o'clock p.m.

Present: Provost Wilson, Councillors and Messrs.
Dean of Guild (Wylie), Councillors Wilson,
Benson and Wilson. The Town Clerk (Duffell)
and Sanitary Inspector in attendance.

The Council considered the following list of Appeals
for relief of taxes and disposal of them as follows:

Household	Name & address of Applicant	Rated	Assessed	Amount of Appeal	Remarks
470	Andrew Bell, Wood Main Street	8	-	1	London
471	Mrs J. Brown do	10	10	11	9/6
472	Mrs Jane M. Brown do	10	10	11	9/6
473	Mrs Marion Brown do	10	10	11	9/6
474	Leah, Kalked, 1 St. Martin's	10	10	11	9/6
475	James Williamson, 10 St. Martin's	6	-	15	9/6
476	James Brown, 10 St. Martin's	1	-	18	10/0
477	William Gordon, 109	6	10	19	0/6
478	James W. Gordon, 45	4	-	11	10/0
479	Mrs Mary Ford, 109	4	-	11	10/0
480	High Ford, 109	4	-	11	10/0
481	John Brown, 55	6	10	19	0/6
482	Mrs Mary Brown, 10 St. Martin's	3	10	1	2
483	John Love, 101	4	10	12	2/6
484	Mrs M. King, 101	5	10	16	5/6
485	Elizabeth Williamson, 101	5	-	15	10/0
486	Henry Brown, 10 St. Martin's	5	-	15	10/0
487	Mrs. C. Morrison, 120	5	0	1	1

An indication of the impact the war was having even in these early days is given by this list of 41 soldiers and sailors in Armadale who were appealing for relief from rates - most were given at least some help. (Armadale Town Council minutes)

free use of the Victoria Hall for a concert in aid of comforts for the Army and Navy, being organised by local ladies.

The minutes of the West Lothian County Council, on the other hand, are much less informative. In fact, there is only one mention of the War in the whole of 1914, relating to a letter from the Bo'ness Labour party about food prices. It was 'allowed to lie on the table', being outwith the power of the Council.

Replica Trench

The War100 event in Bathgate is past, but one of its main attractions, the replica trench, lives on – for a time, at any rate. The trench was created in July in the garden at Bathgate Partnership Centre.

The 48-foot long trench is a breastwork or command trench, meaning that it's built above ground level rather than dug down below ground. The reason for this was practical – the services enter the Centre through the garden so it wasn't possible to dig the trench down into the ground. But there are plenty of historical precedents for breastwork trenches. They were particularly common in Flanders where the water table was high, and sunken trenches flooded. A breastwork trench was drier and more comfortable for the troops, but more liable to damage and less secure than the dug trench.

The replica trench is a wooden framework covered in sandbags. The substantial framework was constructed by the council's Housing, Construction and Buildings Services workshop at Whitehill. The joinery apprentices worked on it as a learning project, something unusual to add to their CVs, and something of benefit to the community.

The sandbags were provided, filled and built up by the apprentices of the Council's Roads and Transportation department; we're very grateful for the hard work, enthusiasm and dedication of all those involved, apprentices and supervisors.

Thanks to advice and guidance from Alan Dowell of Linlithgow, who has a deep knowledge of many aspects of the First World War, the trench took shape. A fire-step was built into the front wall, on which

sentries would have kept watch, and the soldiers stood at the dawn and dusk 'Stand To'. A ladder was made like those by which the troops would have gone over the top. Several recesses are provided for ammunition and supplies, and a couple of small shelters for the soldiers have been set into the parapet wall. These provided some shelter for the men – not proof against shells, but offering some protection against bomb blast, and the cold and rain.

With the trench structure complete, we had to find articles to 'furnish' it. The contents are a mix of items kindly donated by many different people, and replicas sourced from websites such as Tommy'spackfillers.com, and sofmilitary.co.uk) and. The articles were chosen to illustrate the two sides of trench life – everyday life: eating, drinking, washing, shaving, sleeping; and warfare: gas attacks, trench periscopes, and going over the top.

Today's health and safety requirements mean that our trench has to be clean and free of obstacles and other dangers – the very opposite of a real trench in conditions of war; but it gives some idea of the size and proportions of a typical trench.

Of course, no replica can convey the mud and filth, the appalling noise of a bombardment, the stinks, the lice, the rats, the squalor, the boredom and terror of real trench life, but perhaps at least it will give us all pause for thought about war and its terrible sufferings.



The replica trench at Bathgate Partnership Centre.



The real thing - Gordon Highlanders working on a trench, September 1917.

The trench is open for the public to walk through during the normal opening hours of the Bathgate Partnership Centre: Mon- Fri: 8.30am – 10pm, Sat: 9am – 5pm

Guided tours of the trench can be arranged for adult groups or for school groups. Contact Sybil Cavanagh on 01506 282491 or email sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk

1914-18: Fauldhouse Remembers

The '1914-18: Fauldhouse Remembers' project started in June and is looking at the impact of the global conflict of the First World War on one small village - Fauldhouse.

The project volunteers are using old newspapers and other local sources to find out how the War affected the village, and what life was like for those who stayed behind and served on the Home Front.

The project will use local newspapers, books, photographs and maps, together with outings to local cemeteries, memorials, Bangour War Hospital and the Local History Library. We've already spent a wet and windy morning locating and photographing the Commonwealth War Graves Commission WW1 graves in Fauldhouse Cemetery. In addition, we located the names of several Fauldhouse men killed in the war on family gravestones, rather than CWGC ones.

The group is studying what life was like for those on the home front in Fauldhouse 100 years ago. What jobs did the 'starred' men (those in reserved occupations) do? How did the war affect women's work? We've found that the local children helped in the war effort, raising funds by concerts and collections, and uniformed organisations like the scouts contributed by collecting bottles and other salvage for recycling.

Slate Row, Store Row, Red Row - where were all of these now vanished miners' rows? We hope to plot their locations on a map of 1917. We've already found out which mines were in operation in 1914-18, and which shops were in business: there were over forty - far more than today! We're slowly building up a picture of what Fauldhouse was like - isolated in some ways but with a rich community life - golf, cricket, football, bowls, choirs, concerts, the Baillie Institute, churches and chapel, the Co-op, friendly societies and freemasons.



John Wyper, Eastfield Farm, ploughing

Using the files of the West Lothian Courier and the Midlothian Advertiser, we should be able to draw up a fairly complete list of all those who volunteered for the services, before the introduction of conscription in 1916. Working from the names on the war memorial - over 100 of them, and the casualty lists each week in the Courier, we'll also plot as many names as we can onto the map to find out the distribution of the fallen throughout the village.

The group hopes to unearth photos and memorabilia relating to local people, and will scan these and record the stories behind them. So if you have old photos, objects or stories relating to Fauldhouse during the War, take them to the Fauldhouse Partnership Centre and speak to Ann Beattie or any of the library staff, your photos will be scanned while you wait and returned to you.

Some fascinating stories are coming to light - the Fauldhouse family which sent six sons to serve on various fronts - more than almost any other family in West Lothian; the ward at Bangour War Hospital which was adopted as Fauldhouse's own; and the Fauldhouse girls who raised funds to send cigarettes to aid the wounded Bangour soldiers' recovery!



The Cottages, Hillhead, Fauldhouse

For more information, or to offer photos or other items, phone 01506 282491

or email: sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk

Sports that never made it to the Commonwealth Games

In this year of great sporting events, it's interesting to look back at sports which were once popular in West Lothian but have fallen out of favour.

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A hainching stone, found when remaking the road between Falkirk and Slamanann.

Hainching or throwing the bullet was popular in 19th century West Lothian. It was played with a rounded ironstone ball a little bigger than a tennis ball, and the object was to throw or 'hainch' the 'bullet' from one point to another in as few throws as possible. It was played on the open road, but as roads became busier, the game became more and more dangerous. Even a small stone flung with force could cause a nasty injury if it hit someone. There are descriptions of the game in a booklet by James Burns on Philpstown, and a report in the Courier of an attempt to ban it locally in 1874. Both these can be seen in the Local History Library.

Cockfighting is a barbarous sport, now banned in many countries. However, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was considered a sport suitable for school children – and promoted by their teachers! The practice was widespread in Scottish schools of holding a cockfight on Shrove



A cock fight in London c.1808. Detail of a cartoon by Thomas Rowlandson.

Tuesday. The children paid a small fee to enter a bird, money which was a perk of the school master. At Linlithgow Grammar School, 'the real parties in this barbarous amusement were generally a band of sporting characters resident in the burgh or neighbourhood. Two sets of tickets of the same number were put into a hat, and drawn by lot by the parties, and those who drew the same numbers were pitched against each other. In like manner, the victors of these duels were again opponents, and so on till the combatants were reduced to the last pair, when the winning bird was declared to be "victor" and the defeated "victor's man". Such a course of proceedings afforded ample room for betting.' Cockfighting was not finally banned in Scotland till 1895. (Adam Dawson – *Random Recollections of Past Times*, 1868)

Pedestrianism did in fact make it to many Olympic and Commonwealth Games (though not Glasgow 2014). It's the old name for long-distance racewalking, and Addiewell produced a Scottish champion in Alexander Justice in the early years of last century. In his spare time he helped to train Glasgow Rangers players at Ibrox. Pedestrianism was a sport of working men, who competed for money prizes. It was a popular spectator sport but was funded by betting. In the late nineteenth century there was a widespread movement to 'clean up' sports – to codify their rules and get rid of the associated



At Powderhall in July 1914, Alexander Justice won the Scottish championships

betting. Working men competing for money prizes were replaced by amateurs, competing in prestigious competitions up to Olympic level. Racewalking survives but has never recovered its early popularity. As for Alexander Justice - being young and fit, he joined the army. He was injured in 1917, losing both his silver watch and his teeth, but he survived the war.

Quoiting was the most popular sport in West Lothian during the second half of the 19th century and continued so until overtaken by bowling between the Wars. Quoiting (pronounced kitin') was a sport for men made strong by heavy manual labour, whose prestige lay in their strength. The quoit was an iron ring weighing from 8lbs to 20 lbs, depending on the player's preference. The quoit was thrown a distance of 18 yards to get as near as possible to a spike sunk in a square of clay. In 1998, a demonstration quoiting match was held in Blackburn by the Scottish Quoiting Association. It was astonishing to see the sheer physical effort of the game - and the mess as the wet clay splashed up on the competitors each time a quoit landed! As heavy work like mining declined, the sport of kitin' declined with it. The many local clubs have long since wound up; today only one Scottish club survives – in Stonehaven.



This photograph from 1998 of a match at Blackburn shows the immense physical strength required in the game.

To find out more about these or the many other sports that have flourished in West Lothian, visit or contact the Local History Library in Linlithgow Library, or email localhistory@westlothian.gov.uk.

West Lothian Family History Society

The WLFHS is gearing up for another busy session. Since our usual base in the Local History Library at County Buildings is not yet available, the meetings will continue to be held in Blackburn Community Centre, Ash Grove, Blackburn, EH47 7LJ.

The society will have a stall at several upcoming family history fairs, notably the Who Do You Think You Are? Live event at the SECC on 29-31 August, where one of our members Marie Dougan is the keynote speaker.

Volunteers from the society are in the Local History Library in Linlithgow Library every Wednesday and Friday to help the public with their family history enquiries - many of them come from overseas.

Syllabus Autumn 2014

- Sep 2 Regular Meeting at Blackburn Community Centre**
Welcome to new members and introduction to the society; a look at various website and how to store your research on programme or book
- Sep 16 Evening visit to New Register House**
- Oct 7 Regular meeting at Blackburn Community Centre**
Speaker: Dr Irene O'Brien, Glasgow City Archives: Beginning your Irish Family History
- Oct 21 Evening visit to New Register House**
- Nov 4 Regular Meeting at Blackburn Community Centre**
Speaker: Bruce Jamieson on World War One Battlefields, entitled 'Back to the Front'
- Nov 18 Evening visit to New Register House**
- Dec 2 Christmas Get Together, Blackburn Community Centre.**
Stuck with a query? Bring it along and we'll try to solve it at the January meeting
- Dec 9 Evening visit to Register House, Edinburgh**



New members will be made very welcome, whether living locally or far away.

Interested in joining? Full details are available on the WLFHS website - www.wlfhs.org.uk

WLFHS at the **War100** event in Bathgate



Janette Fowlds on duty at the WLFHS stall at the War100 event at Bathgate Partnership Centre on 2 August. The day was well-attended and the workshop was especially popular.



Bill Williamson with his family medals.

Comments? Suggestions?

If you've enjoyed reading this newsletter – or not enjoyed it – let us know. We'd like to hear the sort of articles that interest you, and your comments, suggestions, and feedback will be welcome. If you have any suggestions for future articles, or for improvements that might be made, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Please contact sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk