

Helensburgh Heritage Trust

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Newsletter

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Contributions and suggestions are urgently required and welcome

Connections

Jessie Morrison Inglis' tiny ivory wedding dress is the highlight of an exhibition, "A Century of Style: Costume and Colour 1800-1899" at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum Glasgow (Until 14 February 2016) She walked down the aisle on March 18, 1878 to marry the Rev John Baird. And subsequently gave birth to four sons, the youngest of whom was John Logie Baird and we all know about his subsequent claim to fame.

A slightly sideways connection is that Jessie Inglis was a niece of the famous brothers Anthony and John Inglis, who founded the famous shipbuilding firm of A and J Inglis which closed in 1962. Amongst their famous creations were the paddle steamers Waverley and in 1953 Maid of the Loch. The former visits Helensburgh Pier several times a week during each summer season, but the Maid has been at Balloch Pier on Loch Lomond for so many years that many people felt that she would stay there for ever. However, the very active Loch Lomond Steamship Company volunteers have, over the last 20 years, refurbished and maintained her in all weathers from bow to stern, inside and out. Such that she has a modern role as a Wedding Venue! And 15,000 visitors each year. The charity, of course has the definite aim that she will sail again. This summer she was shortlisted in the Scottish Heritage Business Awards but sadly got no further.

But back to JLB, a collection of his notebooks and other artefacts was recently put up for public auction, and was expected to go to America, but withdrawn when Culture Minister Ed Vaizey refused an export licence to give time for funds to be raised in the UK. At the eleventh hour a Donor businessman who had lived in Helensburgh for 20 years made the purchase at a price reputed to be over £78,000 and arranged for them to be held by Glasgow University. A spokesman welcomed the Archive to the institution where JLB received his training in 1914/15. As well as a recording of the first transmission to the USA in 1927, on a phonovision shellac disc, which is the world's oldest surviving 78rpm record. There is also, in a notebook, the first use of the acronym – **TV**.

The Heritage Centre

We are disappointed to report that our exclusive occupation of the former reference room at Helensburgh Library is over. Whether our displays have not come up to the standard felt appropriate, or there really is a desperate shortage of office accommodation in the town is unclear. The room has now been divided into half and then the King Street side into two again. Each of the new rooms has a centre door so that the remaining area is primarily an access and waiting space. True, some display space remains, but the South window wall will present a major problem by light levels exceeding the recommended levels for paper and many other types of exhibit. The future seems to be that some of our displays may be in the remains of the present room, and secured by the CCTV installed for the purpose, but most will be along the balcony and next to the public Computing Centre.

The Local History section of the Library, with which we felt happily associated, has also moved to the square reading area near to the lift. The walls used for the Annual Anderson Trust and other picture exhibitions remain available, as does some balcony.

Our exquisite sea going model of 'Comet' is to have a new secure case. It will then be lodged in the Library Entrance lobby between the automatic doors. There will also be room for a full display of information about Henry Bell and his work in the town. Whether the public or library users will stop in that windy and perhaps cold area before proceeding into the warm Library will be seen. *KNC*

Television Tuition

The Tower Digital Arts Academy in Sinclair Street has launched The Baird School of Television - A Digital Skills Academy. There may or may not be a connection - but the standard of pre-transmission trailers advertising past and future events, films and live theatre from around the world has improved greatly in the last few months!

Current Displays in the 'Heritage Centre' :-

Case A-The Original Televisor
B - Our 2004 working replica of the Daily Express 1936 DIY Televisor
C.- Life beneath the Waves
D.- Empty
E.- Library exhibit on balcony
F - Deborah Kerr.
G - John Logie Baird
H - Jack Buchanan
J. - Empty
K.- Empty
L - Andrew Bonar Law
M - Scale Model of 'Comet'
Paintings of Henry Bell and John Logie Baird are on the walls, a watercolour by Princess Louise and the Grants of Arms to the Burgh Council and the Community Council.
The Provost's Lamp is now at the Computer Centre! Why?

Grants in Argyll

The Hill House, Helensburgh's World famous attraction, owned by The National Trust for Scotland is now 113 years old and in need of major conservation work to the building. "Keeping it Modern" is an initiative of The Getty Foundation of the USA which, in its first Award in the UK has allocated a grant of £95,000

The Kilmartin Museum Trust has been seeking funds to create a new Museum, Visitor Centre and appropriate Car Parking spaces. In August it heard that its second application to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been successful. £400,000 of development funding was awarded to enable it to progress toward a round 2 stage for £3.1 Million to commence work in 2016 "To promote and Interpret this Internationally Important Landscape."

Written in the Landscape is an exciting three-year joint project to catalogue, conserve and digitise 64 Argyllshire family and estate archives. Earlier this month it was announced that a consortium of Argyll and Bute Council Archives, the Argyll Estates have received a grant of up to £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to catalogue, restore and digitise the many maps and documents hidden away for generations.

Lucy Cast, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland said: "Saving our historic archives has never been more important. They provide such a valuable resource for anyone who wants to delve into their past. Thanks to National Lottery players, the Heritage Lottery Fund is able to support projects such as *Written in the Landscape* that will enable volunteers and the wider community to learn about what life was like and how that has shaped who we are today."

Heritage Forum

The Argyll and Bute Museums and Heritage Forum held its A G M in Inverary earlier this month. Some 34 representatives of the many member organisations assembled from the islands, lowlands and Clyde Coast, demonstrating just how big an area is involved. My four years on the Committee ended and I was replaced by Cathy Montgomery of Strachur Smiddy. The new Treasurer is Zoe Fleming of Luing Heritage Centre. Alison Palmer of Oban War and Peace Museum continues as Chairman as does the Secretary Elaine McChesney of Campbeltown Museum. You will understand from that list why committee meetings are mostly by e-mail and telephone!

There were several speakers; Bob Hay described the successful **Lismore Grave slabs project** funded by Historic Scotland and the HLF. Four pre-Christian stones have been lifted, restored and placed on public view in their own roadside shelter on the island. Ishbel MacKinnon introduced the *Written in the Landscape* project (see adjacent column!) and invited us all to visit the Argyll Estate Office after the meeting. Sara Thomas of Museums Galleries Scotland answered her own question - **What is a Wikimedian? ***** that is her job with MGS! Devon McHugh also of MGS publicised the Festival of Museums to be held next May. Helensburgh will not be involved.

In the last year I attended a very successful day course on 'Marking and Cataloguing' This year there is scheduled a course on 'Paper Conservation.' These and other relevant courses for members are organised by the Forum but funded by MGS or the Gordon Fraser Trust.

I would like to continue to represent the Trust but without being on the Forum Committee.

KNC

Book for the Trust

Our request last time has borne fruit, and we are delighted to announce that Member Chris Sanders is to compile **'Helensburgh Through Time'** for publication next year by Amberley Publishing. The aim will be to show pictures of times past contrasted with the appearance of the same situation today. We are sure that Chris will be grateful for any unpublished pictures of buildings or situations in times past which you may have. He is a competent photographer and is looking forward to creating the current images.

This is the space where your contribution should have appeared!!!!!!

What a shame that the Bust of JLB on the sea front was not provided with uplighting as part of the Chord redevelopment scheme. It was moved 9 metres and rebuilt so was well within the project. Henry Bell also on the sea front, the Centenary and the Bicentenary Obelisks in Colquhoun Square all look good at night. But John Logie Baird peers over the Clyde to the lights of Greenock.