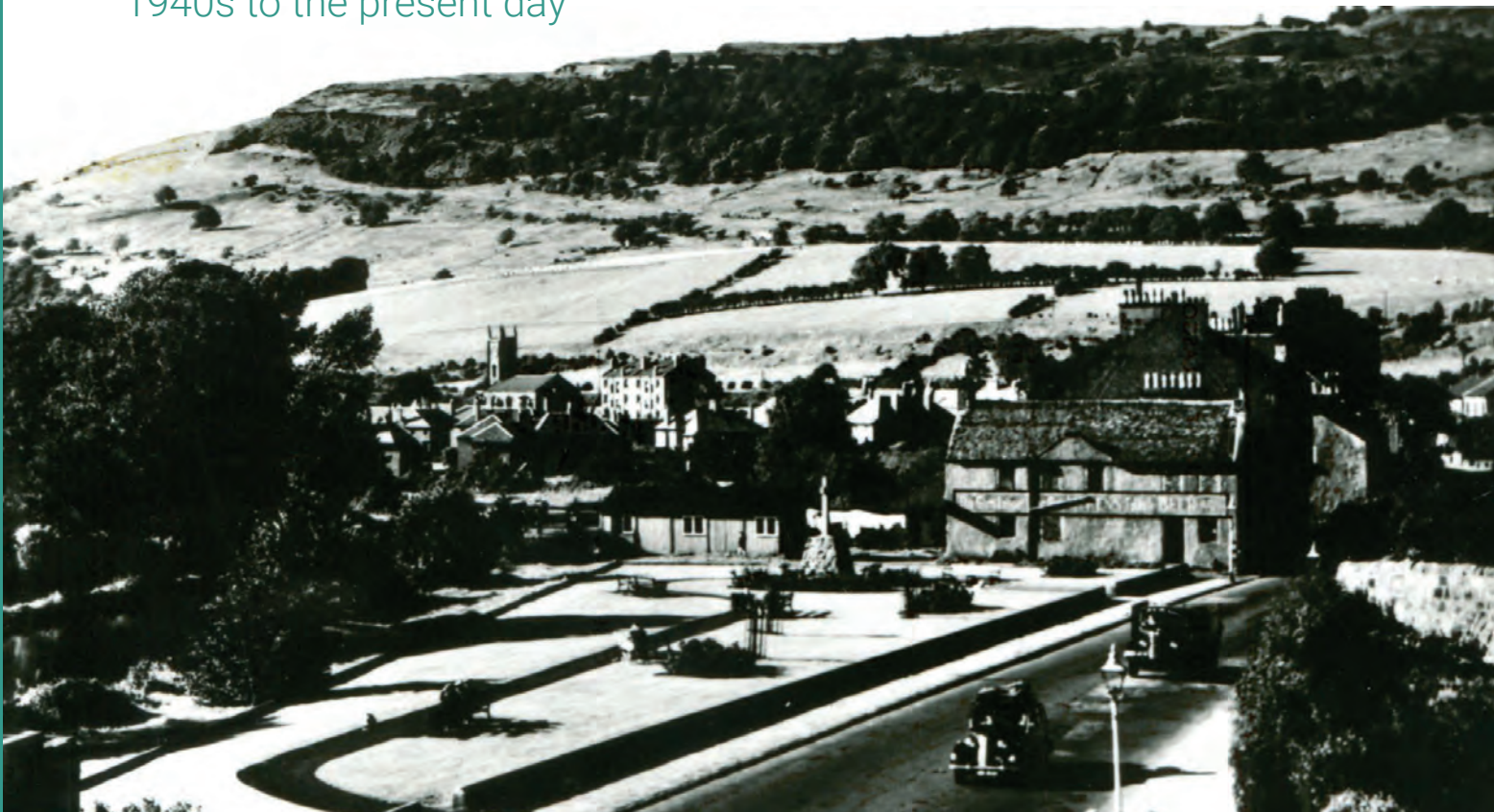


A WALK THROUGH THE PAST

Memories of Old Kilpatrick

1940s to the present day





LOTTERY FUNDED

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2017 Action Old Kilpatrick (AOK) were awarded funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake an oral history project about the history and heritage of the village of Old Kilpatrick. Shortly thereafter a small group of AOK volunteers received training at the Scottish Oral History Centre, University of Strathclyde and began the process of interviewing residents of the village. In total, 27 people kindly agreed to share their memories which were digitally recorded, summarised and analysed. Birth dates of the interviewees ranged from the early 1930s to the 1970s which allowed an exploration of how things used to be as well as recording the changes that have occurred from the Second World War to the present day. A selection of edited memories can now be found in this booklet presented alongside fascinating images, many of which were generously donated by the interviewees. For those relatively 'new' to the village we're sure you'll be amazed at the changes that have taken place. Who today would go for a swim in the Clyde?

In addition to this booklet AOK have also created two audio walks and a new website where you can hear the memories of those interviewed and

see more images. The audio walks will allow users to follow set routes whilst listening to short audio clips that let you 'see' the present as the past. In essence it will help bring the past to life.

Obviously, any such project owes a debt of gratitude to many. We would therefore like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for their support without which the project would have remained as a nice idea. Of course, an enormous thank you is owed to those who so kindly agreed to share their memories and photographs with us. Even with financial support, without the contribution of the undernoted we would have had no project at all. So thank you to:

June Alderdice, Anne Alexander, Florence Boyle, Evelyn Campbell, Carol Cummings, Jim Dunbar, Billy Forstyh, Edith Girvan, Irene Haworth, John Hood, Sheena Johnston, Jim Kirkpatrick, Maggie Larkin, Carol Mackenzie, Myra Mackenzie, Kenny MacKenzie, Jim McCall, Eddie McDade, Lucinda McGinty, Maureen McKeever, Kenny Miller, George Mirren, Rona Mirren, Tom Morrison, Elma Robertson, Owen Sayers, David Stormonth and Steve Woods.



Photo courtesy of NCAP
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Situated between Clydebank and Dumbarton, the village of Old Kilpatrick is bounded to the south by the shores of the River Clyde and to the north by the Kilpatrick Braes. Over the decades it has been witness to many social, economic and cultural changes and yet retains a distinctive 'village' identity. On its outskirts it has a long history of rural life whilst its proximity to the Clyde, the famous shipyards, the Forth & Clyde Canal and a major railway line all signify historical links to its heavily industrialized neighbours. The post-war decline of shipbuilding and heavy engineering have now been replaced by smaller industries whilst a rise in tourism and leisure pursuits such as walking and cycling has brought many new visitors to the area.

This project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, was led by Action Old Kilpatrick (AOK), a recently formed, fully constituted community group of volunteers who are actively interested in enhancing the environment and celebrating the heritage of Old Kilpatrick. They

engaged with both young and old members of the local population seeking their assistance and participation in helping to create a digital, historical legacy that will now be made fully accessible for use by anyone with an interest in the history and heritage of the village and its surroundings. Fully trained volunteers digitally recorded the testimonies of 27 residents of Old Kilpatrick and used this primary source material along with other historical data to create a series of interesting and dynamic outcomes such as an audio walk, a new web-based database and this illustrated booklet. The project has also delivered a new oral history archive which will be added to the existing oral history collections belonging to West Dunbartonshire Council Libraries and Museums. The project has therefore helped expand the knowledge and understanding of the history and heritage of Old Kilpatrick to its own population as well as to wider audiences.

Two audio walks link spoken memories with specific places

and are accessible using any smartphone or mp3 player. A series of sound clips taken from the oral histories have been blended together with 'voiceover' sections providing basic directions and information that can be listened to at various points or sections along well-established and safe pathways. Significant points of local history and heritage include the Forth & Clyde Canal, the Erskine Bridge, a former bus depot (the site of a Roman Fort), the former Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire Railway, the current railway station (formerly the Glasgow Dumbarton & Helensburgh line), local housing, shops and businesses, formal and informal play areas and the Glen and Saltings; important natural habitats and leisure areas. Unlike other more traditional monuments, the audio walks will provide an immediate and intimate experience of past events, helping to reinvigorate an interest in the local history and heritage. The audio walks will also provide the additional health benefit of taking exercise!



The audio walks and more information about the project, as well as audio clips, photographs and other material we collected about Old Kilpatrick, its history and people can be found on the project website:

www.awalkthroughthepast.org.uk



AUDIO WALK 1

The walk starts in the village centre and takes the walker along Dumbarton Road, to the Forth and Clyde canal, through the Saltings and up Ferry Road back to Dumbarton Road and to the start of the walk at the village shops.

The walk is about 2 miles long and the route is indicated on the page opposite. The recording can be paused and restarted to fit with your walking speed.

The points marked on the map give an indication of the topics you can read about in this booklet and hear in the recording.

The audio walk recording can be downloaded from www.awalkthroughthepast.org.uk as an mp3 file and can be played on any smartphone, tablet or mp3 player.

1. The village centre
2. Dumbarton Road
3. Bus garage
4. Gavinburn school
5. Roman Crescent
6. The Forth and Clyde canal
7. The Clyde shore
8. Erskine Bridge
9. Erskine ferry
10. Scout hall
11. Old train station
12. Barclay church
13. Memories of the Blitz
14. Under the bridge
15. The Ettrick & the shops
16. The community



Just happy times. A nice place to grow up, Old Kilpatrick; people were friendly, people knew each other as well.

*VE day celebrations
(photo courtesy of Robert Fleming)*



THE VILLAGE

The heart of the village is the centre with busy shops, pubs and a seating area with colourful flower beds.

In the 1960s, older two and three storey properties with shops underneath were swept away, some by compulsory purchase, in a wholesale redevelopment to create the shopping centre. This created more open spaces and flats replaced shops.

OLD KILPATRICK ON TV

Jim McCall

“When they built Thistleuek, there was a popular television programme – ‘Tonight’ on BBC. There was a gentleman called Fyfe Robertson; and famously Fyfe Robertson did a piece to camera at Thistleuek for the Tonight programme and it was to show how council housing was developed.

IT'S CHANGE LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE

Irene Haworth

“I don't think it's a village as such any more. I think just, you know, folk come here to live but they work in Glasgow, you know what I mean. You don't know everybody now like you used to. I mean I can walk down to the village and I don't know anybody. Whereas in the old days it was “aw hello”, “hello”, “hello”

everywhere you went. You'd go out for 5 minutes and come back an hour later but nowadays... I suppose it's changed, like everything else. I don't think there's the same community spirit anymore.

AWAY OUT IN NO-MAN'S LAND

Myra Mackenzie

“When I told girls at work I was going with this guy, came from Old Kilpatrick they went “Old Kilpatrick, do they still have the stagecoach down there?” Because to us it was away out in no-man's land. But it was just a lovely wee village to me, you know, and it was quite a nice wee [village], and everybody knew everybody and everybody was related to everybody. So, I was just a complete outsider.

It was an entirely different village to what it is just now. We just used to take turns of going to each other's houses. So I got to know people that way. But then I started to like it. And when I went further up into Glasgow or Partick, I can't suffer all this noise, and trains and buses and bustle. No, I'll just go back home.

Myra Mackenzie

DUMBARTON ROAD

Dumbarton Road runs through the whole village, connecting it to Dalmuir on the east side and the A82 on the west. From early 1900s trams were running up it until 1960s when the tracks were dug up and the new road built. During this time, many properties on either side of the road were demolished to make way for the wider road.

Thistleneuk estate was built on the north side and a couple of shops across the road were demolished and flats were built in their place.

THISTLENEUK COMMUNITY

Jim McCall

“ We played football at the old football park in Sunnyside where Thistleneuk is now. There was a Sunnyside Park and that’s where we played most of our football, at Sunnyside. There was a strong community, and everyone got on pretty well. My recollection is that we didn’t really identify each other in terms of religion and that was the general tenor of things round Old Kilpatrick. You lived in Old Kilpatrick, you came from there... end of... whereas the dividing line was between Old Kilpatrick and Bowling, OK and Duntocher.

THISTLENEUK ORCHARD

Carol Cummings

“ This was an orchard... it was Smith’s orchard here. And see the two posts as you come up the path there [Thistleneuk], that was the orchard gate and we used to try

and get into the orchard to steal apples but it didn’t work very well [why not, what was preventing you?] ...Mrs Smith and her family would be around and any time you tried it, they would be there.

THE ETTRICK

Ken Miller

“ The pub was called ‘the vandal’s nightmare’ because there was absolutely nothing you could damage in the place. I even knew the architect that designed the new building. It lay for years and years before it was rebuilt. The building was taken down and the pub never closed. The ladies’ toilet was, you had to come out and go up the close, and leave a girlfriend standing at the mouth of the close and then you’d go out the back court and that was the ladies’ toilet. There was no ladies’ toilet in the place! Some tourists were in the snug one night and, Mary was the manageress at the time, they said where was the

ladies’ toilet and, this is genuine, she took the lady, an English lady I think it was, outside and pointed across the road to the Telstar and said you go in the lounge door and through the back to the ladies’ toilet.

PUBS AND SHOPS

Jim McCall

“ I’m having to remember in the centre of the village we had the nursery – Freddie Laing who was a nurseryman opposite Kirkton. You had then auld Kirkton. There was the old Ettrick Bar and that was auld land behind it between the Ettrick and Erskine View and then there was auld land that is now the Thistleneuk housing estate - that was auld land - there was old housing in there. My picture is of quite a lot of changes. You had Kate’s Bar; we had Pirie the Chemist; you had Davie Graham, he was the newsagent; we had Bill Butler, he was quite a character and he had probably what you would call a deli /off-licence – but at one stage he had a chip shop in Station Road – near where the police station is.





*Top: Dumbarton Road with Gavinburn Place on the right, looking east
(photo courtesy of SCRAN, © St Andrews University Library)*

Left: Freddie Laing's nursery (photo courtesy of Robert Fleming)

*Right: View from Dumbarton Road looking towards Thistleneuk
(photo courtesy of Douglass Montgomery)*





OLD KIRKTON HOUSES

Myra Mackenzie

“ Well it was the old Kirkton, you know where Kirkton is, where the graveyard is, well that was the old Kirkton and it was really old-fashioned and I had a few friends in there [who] had children the same age as mine. So, the first time they invited me up there, I think it was night time, and you went up, it was like a stair, and then it was a wee landing. And she took me in to what I would call the living room. So, she said “Would you like tea or coffee?” and I said “I would love a coffee”. So, she came out the living room, out the front door and walked, that way, you know in this wee corridor. And I went.., she said “It’s aw right, my kitchen’s out here.” So, they had to walk actually out the door, across this landing and into the kitchen. So, I said “Do you think I could use your toilet?” And she said “Oh wait a minute till I get a torch.” So, I went..., and she went “I’ll need to show you where it is.” So, she took me down the stairs, round the back, and a big, big long walk right up the back to the toilets. I said “How do you manage at night time and that?” She said “Oh we’re used to it and we love it.” But it was a lovely community down there, you know. Everybody spoke and helped each other out. If somebody wisnae in for their children coming from school, they would look after them. And then facing that was St. Patrick’s Well and it was a well then, with the wee iron cup and a chain.

FRY’S SHOP

Rona Mirren

“ We went to Fry’s which was the ethnic shop, the one right at the top of Gavinburn Place, that belonged to a guy called Fry. We were in there every morning. He was a grocer, newsagents, he sold everything, he sold like stuff for your school like jotters and pencils and rubbers and groceries, newspapers. We were in there all the time. My Mum went there to get her paper and her rolls in the morning... and next door to Fry’s there was a grocer’s shop and it was a big shop and it sold like loose potatoes and vegetables and they sold meat. They had like a deli counter they call it now, but they had a counter with cheese and different things in it. And then there was a like a house and then down a wee bit there was a coloured gentleman who had that shop, we were quite pally with him, he used to let me work the tills and all that and let me serve just because I wanted to and he was nice, you know. And there was a café before that building society had that, but I don’t think the café paid, so it closed down.

SWING PARK AT THE WELL

Myra Mackenzie

“ There was a wee swing park there and it had two wee baby swings and two ordinary swings. So, I used to take [my son] down there so as he got bigger he was in the bigger swing and he’d say “Can I go up to the well to get a drink out the

special cup?” But it came from a spring, this water. It was absolutely gorgeous and they had it all lovely. But look at it now, there’s nothing, except a plaque. As many people will come through and say “Can you tell me where St. Patrick’s Well is?” And you’re embarrassed to say that’s where it is now.

JIMMY WEIR’S GARAGE

Rona Mirren

“ Jimmy Weir owned... he had a garage where Kirk Crescent is. See the new build that is in that wee bit, Jimmy Weir he had a... Weir’s Buses, that’s where he housed his buses, in there he had about four or five buses and that’s where he had his buses in there.

But it was a lovely community down there, you know. Everybody spoke and helped each other out. If somebody wisnae in for their children coming from school, they would look after them.

BUS GARAGE

Throughout the 1930s the Scottish Motor Traction Company, Limited, of Edinburgh (SMT) gained control of the vast majority of privately-owned bus services across the country. Two subsidiary companies were formed in 1932: Western SMT, in the south-west; and Central SMT, in Lanarkshire, and West Dunbartonshire. In August 1936 the 'very modern' Gavinburn Depot was opened to absorb and replace other outlying depots. Old Kilpatrick had been chosen for its convenience for both city and country terminals and now Gavinburn offered covered capacity for over 120 buses.

During the Clydebank Blitz, of March 1941, buses from Gavinburn were among the first relief vehicles to assist with subsequent mass evacuation. The depot location made traffic movements possible, to the west and north, away from dangers in the urban areas. Drivers and conductors braved the air raids; some platform staff are known to have displayed great selflessness and physical courage, as well as acts of compassion towards wounded and displaced.

Post-War, bus travel enjoyed continuous expansion with new bus production flooding in from around 1947/48 onwards. The service network peaked between

1955 and 1965 with buses carrying passengers from all over West Dunbartonshire to and from shipyards, engineering workshops, factories such as Singer's, and to the various villages and schemes on the Old Kilpatrick hillsides. Leisure also created demand with people wanting to be transported to shops, cinemas, sports events and even day touring. These demands were met by Gavinburn Depot which by the mid-1950s had a weekly vehicle mileage of around 131,000 miles, carrying around 678,000 passengers. The 250 drivers and 280 conductors took care of the business.

With the rise of private car ownership, and other uncontrollable factors, passenger loadings suffered. Larger buses, reduced frequencies, one-person operation, and finally whole service cuts, charted the decline of buses from the Old Kilpatrick Depot. Larger single deck buses began to replace the ubiquitous red double deckers and by the end of the 1970s conductors were being phased out. The deregulation of public transport in 1986 brought further changes with Kelvin Scottish running their blue and yellow liveried buses out of Gavinburn until the summer of 1989 when they reverted once more to red with the formation of Kelvin Central

Buses. As the need to rationalise its network pressed upon management, a decision was taken to close the depot, virtually sixty years on from its opening, in May 1996.

For a brief period a local campaign was launched to try and purchase the Depot and establish a Roman Fort visitor centre. However, First Bus decided to sell the Gavinburn Depot and recently it has acted as a storage yard and indoor football centre.

Source: Alex Strachan

HALLOWEEN Lucinda McGinty

“ I remember at Halloween we went round the whole village. [We] all ended up in the bus garage because the conductors and the drivers used to give us all the pennies and halfpennies. But we had to sing or say a poem or do something. You didn't go to the door and say "Trick or Treat" It was "please can we have our Halloween?" if they were going to let you, they'd say "Right what you going to do?" and usually you had it all rehearsed, you knew what you were doing. My friends and that we used to go – I mean, there was nay costumes, you got your mother's clothes on or your father's clothes on and bonnets and... that was it.



GAVINBURN SCHOOL

The school was in use from 1887 until 1941 when the main part of it was bombed in the 1941 Blitz. By 1949, four classrooms were operating from two huts and by 1953, when the school roll was 362 pupils, part-time education was in place. In 1954 the new school was opened with the infant extensions added in 1975.

It was a great wee primary school. All the local children went and had great fun at the sports days. It was a nice school.

Irene Haworth

CAROL'S CLASS

Carol Mackenzie

“ There were two classes of the same age. My husband was in the other class. He, they were, the older ones were put in one class and then I was in the younger class because I was a later birthday. There were more boys than girls in my class. I was in the room where the nursery is now in Gavinburn. That's where the two primary one classes were because the nursery wasn't obviously there and they hadn't built the extension, so we were in the class, which was outside, primary one just across from the headmaster.

WAR GAMES

Billy Forsyth

“ In school, we used to have a lot of fun in the school playground. I can remember playing “kingy” and dodge -ball and various other sort of military type things – well, obviously,

it was at the latter end of the war experience, which was still very prominent... well, I never experienced that really, but that was still uppermost in peoples' minds, so we played a lot of sort of war games.

LIBRARY

Carol Mackenzie

“ I used to go there to vote with my Dad and my Mum. And my Dad would go and take me up there and we'd to the library and it was just a nice atmosphere in the library as well. You knew it was part of the school before, but it had a nice feeling to it, and nice displays, and I remember when I was older going in, taking the kids in from school, would take them in there to go to the library and get a visit and see what there was and the displays and they'd a display of

Kilpatrick Boys Club, with a football. I remember it was signed with all the players. They'd won some, I don't know if it was a Scottish tournament or something but they'd won it and my brother's name was on it because he played football for them at one time. But I remember going there when I was young. And I used to go in to vote as well. It was just a nice place. It's a shame its gone. These things happen.

Photo courtesy of Elma Robertson



ROMAN CRESCENT

THE ARRIVAL

Evelyn Campbell

“ My first memories were, in actual fact, we arrived on a horse and cart with all the furniture. I remember jumping off and running down the path and running up to this new house – it was upstairs – it was a four in the block and we were upstairs. It was coal fires and we had a back to back hearth and my Mum used to hang our socks up at night in the kitchen – it kept the kitchen warm and we had a coal fire in one of the bedrooms too.

THE DUMPS

Jim McCall

“ The workings from the building of the houses - and there was a lot of sand up at that end of the scheme, huge big piles of sand; and between the houses on one side of Roman Crescent, and the housing where the old prefabs had been, at the top end of Roman Crescent, that divide between the houses was primarily woodland and we called it The Dumps – again because there was lots of workings – I remember lots of sand there. There were very few trees or foliage, it was all a huge big play area of sand, it was a great area to play. And then on the other side of the house of course we had the canal, which was busy because

there was lots of traffic on the canal - primarily puffers and fishing boats coming from the east.

PREFABS

Jim McCall

“ After the Second World War, huge shortage of housing. The government needed to build housing quickly and the prefabs were functional and could be built very quickly. At the top of Roman Crescent before you come down the road... the scheme wasn't there - there were a number of prefabs built there, not many, probably about a dozen prefabs. We were about the first one off the Dumbarton Road, on the left. We had a garden, a front and back door. The novel feature was the fact that you had a fridge in the kitchen, which was a great luxury: it was unknown to have a fridge!

THE 'TINKERS' CAMP

Jim McCall

“ Then of course there was the other presence of the 'tinker' community; adjacent to Roman Crescent was a piece of land that's now used as a kind of boatyard at the canal house: that was called the 'tinkers' park. So that was a camping site, the 'tinkers' would regularly camp there - as well as that piece of

ground they camped down Bowling shore and I surmise that they'd camped there - this is going back for many generations.

We weren't scared of them, we were aware of them. They would come round the housing, sharpening knives and forks and general bartering, maybe do a bit of palm reading or what have you... they were very much part of the Scottish scene. In the summer months there would be the 'tinkers' camp. It was a big black tarpaulin – you could smell their camp fire – it was very exotic!

GAMES AT THE CIRCLE

Sheena Johnston

“ That was what we called 'the circle' and we would meet and we'd come out at night and play skipping ropes and, you know, play the beds and the chalk on the pavement. And we had a great game called tracking. We'd put wee arrows and we'd all try and find our way to this special place that you'd go to. It was all great you know. You were out all the time.

THE CANAL

BARGES ON THE CANAL

Anne Alexander

“ Ah....well, I can well remember the Forth & Clyde canal and, at that time, at the time of the Blitz, there were barges going up and down from Bowling constantly and they were being pulled by big Clydesdales and I never was quite sure what was on the barges but there was certainly plenty of barge and horse traffic. And also alongside the... from the canal bridge at Erskine Ferry, there was a whole crowd of piggeries and that's when the guys used to come around for the all the leaves and peelings and so on and that was fed to the pigs.

PUFFERS AND THE FISHING SMACKS

Jim McCall

“ The puffer traffic taking the coal to Bowling and also in the summer months we'd get the fishermen coming through from the east and we would frequently help - that was great fun to open up the lock gates for them, to see the water flooding back into the lock. It was mainly puffers and the fishing smacks, as we called them. Other than that there wasn't any tourist traffic. I do remember some barges – I do recollect the horse pulling a barge: horse drawn in the 'fifties.

DANGEROUS CANAL

Steve Woods

“ It was just generally regarded as being dangerous. It was still a very active waterway, so it was deep in the wintertime, it could be particularly dangerous because of the formation of ice which often wasn't thick or strong enough to support a child. So we were all intimidated by our parents not to go there. But in most cases it didn't stop us, but I think we had a healthy respect for it.

DROWNINGS

Owen Sayers

“ The canal was a bit of a focus at that time because over the years it wasn't uncommon for kids to fall in the canal. I remember probably two or three that were drowned in the canal and I can remember the crowds that were out on the canal banks and men diving in trying to see if they could find somebody who had been reported as having fallen in.

SWIMMING IN THE CANAL

Myra Mackenzie

“ The canal, the kids used to swim in, in the summer, you know, and you would see them all out swimming. But it was clean then, it was clean. But I could never swim but the kids



Photo courtesy of Elma Robertson

all used to go down there and swim. Because I'd say "Where are they?" and their Dad would say "They'll be in the canal swimming." They thought that was the big swimming pool. And they used to dive off the bridge into the canal.

DERELICT CANAL

Kenny MacKenzie

Towards the mid-1970s the canal was very, very derelict and I suppose the Millennium initiative really did breathe new life into it. But I quite clearly remember being at a photographic trip with my dad and not being able to follow the tow-path as it was completely overgrown. So that was early 1970s... you know the weeds, the brambles and the nettles had reclaimed everything.

FERRYDYKE COTTAGE

Jim McCall

“ The cottage (at Ferrydyke) was lived in. I don't recollect those stables being used. But adjacent to the cottage there was a piggery. Gibby his name was, Gibby. He ran the piggery and he would come round and we would give him the scrapings, you know, from the veg and there was a bin that was set aside for the pigswill. And he would collect the scrapings and put it into his... not sure if it was a car... an old vehicle; and these bins would be full of all sorts of eggshells and... and then he'd boil it up and feed it to the pigs. But lots of people kept pigeons and hens – even in Roman Crescent. Lots of my friends would have pigeons – it was just as a hobby. And some people kept hens in the back garden. Obviously they fed the hens and then they would slaughter them.



*Photo courtesy of SCRAN
© East Dunbartonshire Council*

We weren't allowed to go near the canal... if we did... my mother didn't know about it.

Evelyn Campbell

*Photo courtesy of SCRAN
© Newsquest (Herald & Times)*



Photo courtesy of Owen Sayers



THE CLYDE SHORE

Photos courtesy of Elma Robertson

The Saltings is an area between the village and the river made up of regenerated woodland and meadow. It was originally a salt marsh, locally known as the Planting, prone to tidal influences and fed by fresh water burns, the Dalnottar (or Lusset) Burn and the Gavin Burn. These burns were re-routed along the sea wall when the Forth and Clyde Canal was built (c1790) and when the railway closed, the whole site was filled with rubble to carry the foundations for the Erskine Bridge.



FAVOURITE SPOT

John Hood

The shore was a favourite spot for locals and visitors alike especially during the summer months. Visitors would shelter under the mud banks and set up stall there laying out towels and starting fires to boil up tea and roast potatoes. A particular sport was to go further into the water when ships were going down river. This would result in the river receding before charging back in. Tugs created the best effect! Another popular spot to rival the

Bowling shore was the short stretch of sand on the Erskine side, beside Erskine Hospital. It was once a popular picnic area in the summer and attracted hordes to site, build sandcastles and swim.

SWIMMING IN THE CLYDE

Elma Robertson

“ It certainly wasn’t as clean a place as it is now when we went picnics there but we did go... and we swam, in the Clyde, and when I think on it now what it was like then. I mean you could swim now... it’s a lot

cleaner but I can remember opening my eyes, you know swimming underwater, and thinking ‘oh gee wizz’ you could hardly see it was like foggy, you know.

SHIPYARDS

June Alderdice

“ When we stayed up at Erskine Ferry, it was during the war, and there was Findlay’s Yard and there was Napier and Miller’s - but I don’t know if Napier and Miller’s came after Findlay’s boatyard. And you could hear the noises, you know,



The Napiers yard was there at one time, but I don't know if there was any ship building activity, or ship breaking activity that went on there. Napiers yard was along where the tanks and the oil depot was... they'd be pumping oil. I believe it was along in that area. Other factories that I remember was the Aurora Light Company. There were lots of little businesses right enough... coal businesses and scrap metal.

Billy Forsyth

the working, but it didn't bother me; but the river was quite foggy in the winter and you always heard the boats' horns going.

SHIPS ON THE CLYDE

David Stormonth

“ The ships going up and down the Clyde as well: there was many a memorable night... we had the Queen Elizabeth, we had the Waverley going down the Clyde.

Special days when you knew that something was going to happen... the sailing ships going up to Glasgow recently, you knew that was going to happen, everyone was down at the front watching and seeing things like that you know.

TOAST AT THE SHORE

Billy Forsyth

“ Another time, what we would occasionally do is, we'd take bread out of the house (plain bread), me and my pal, and we'd take a pack of butter, when my Mum wasn't looking, and a couple of forks, and we'd

head down to the Bowling shore. We'd walk right down the shore at Old Kilpatrick and along... bypass Donald's Quay, as it was called, The White Perch, and we'd go down to the Bowling shore. We'd build a fire and make toast - that was good fun as well. I really enjoyed that... we'd be away the whole day.

SMELLY SCOUTS

Jim McCall

“ Well, the water wasn't too good – it was full of the flotsam and jetsam as it still is to this day. A more attractive destination was to take the Erskine Ferry. Adjacent to the Ferry on the Erskine side there was – still is – a nice parcel of sandy beach and that was a favourite spot. Above the beach line there was a camping ground and that was frequented by the Scouts from all areas of Glasgow. I was a regular attender at the Catholic Church at Old Kilpatrick. Lots of members of the Scout troop would stride down to the Church smelling of smoke and sodden kilts.

ERSKINE BRIDGE

Due to changing economic and social circumstances the Erskine Ferry came under increasing pressure to carry traffic and passengers across the River Clyde. It was therefore decided to build a new bridge that would cope with the then current and anticipated increases in traffic and allow shipping to use the River Clyde without interruption. In 1963, Freeman Fox & Partners were appointed as the consulting engineers and they were joined in 1965 by W.A Fairhurst & Partners who designed the foundations and the 14 reinforced concrete piers. In 1967, at the beginning of its construction, the new bridge was designed as the longest of its type in the world (a total length of 1322m) and would eventually cost £10.5 million to build. It is a cable-stayed girder bridge, has a clearance over high water of 180 feet and was built to withstand winds of up to 130mph. On 2 July 1971 the Erskine Ferry made its final journey across the river and the new Erskine Bridge was opened by HRH Princess Anne.

DOMINANT STRUCTURE

Jim McCall

“ Such a huge structure, such a dominant structure. Not many local people were employed in the building of it: it was all contracted labour from elsewhere. There was interest in it, but to some extent it was by-passing the village. So although there was a huge dominant structure, it didn't actually bring much commerce to the village. I do remember driving over it just after it was opened and it was fantastic.

THE VILLAGE SHOOK

Myra Mackenzie

“ I remember the bridge getting built. The whole of Old Kilpatrick shook because they were going down that depth for the cement and the whole of Old Kilpatrick used to shake.

THE FOG

Owen Sayers

“ The sad thing was we were never able to see the two ends of the bridge joining because the morning that they were doing the joining it was so foggy that the bridge was enveloped in fog. So, we know it was going on but we couldn't see it. I think we saw it on the Pathe Newsreels... oh, or did we have television then? I think it was on the news on television... yeah, it was.

PROGRESS IS COMING

George Mirren

“ When they started putting up the bits for roads and all this it was a bit of shambles right enough but it had to be done. But, you watched them and how great it was when they were putting the sections in. It was like two big arms and they were sitting... I mean the weight on them... they were like parts of a ship the size of them tae be put on there and then they welded them and then the next one... they would... over again, until they got there.

I mean, you had the riveters, you know, along with welders and all that on the [Erskine] bridge and they were working all hours there, you know, and then as I say it was more the people down here that was getting the noise. But what can you do when progress is coming?

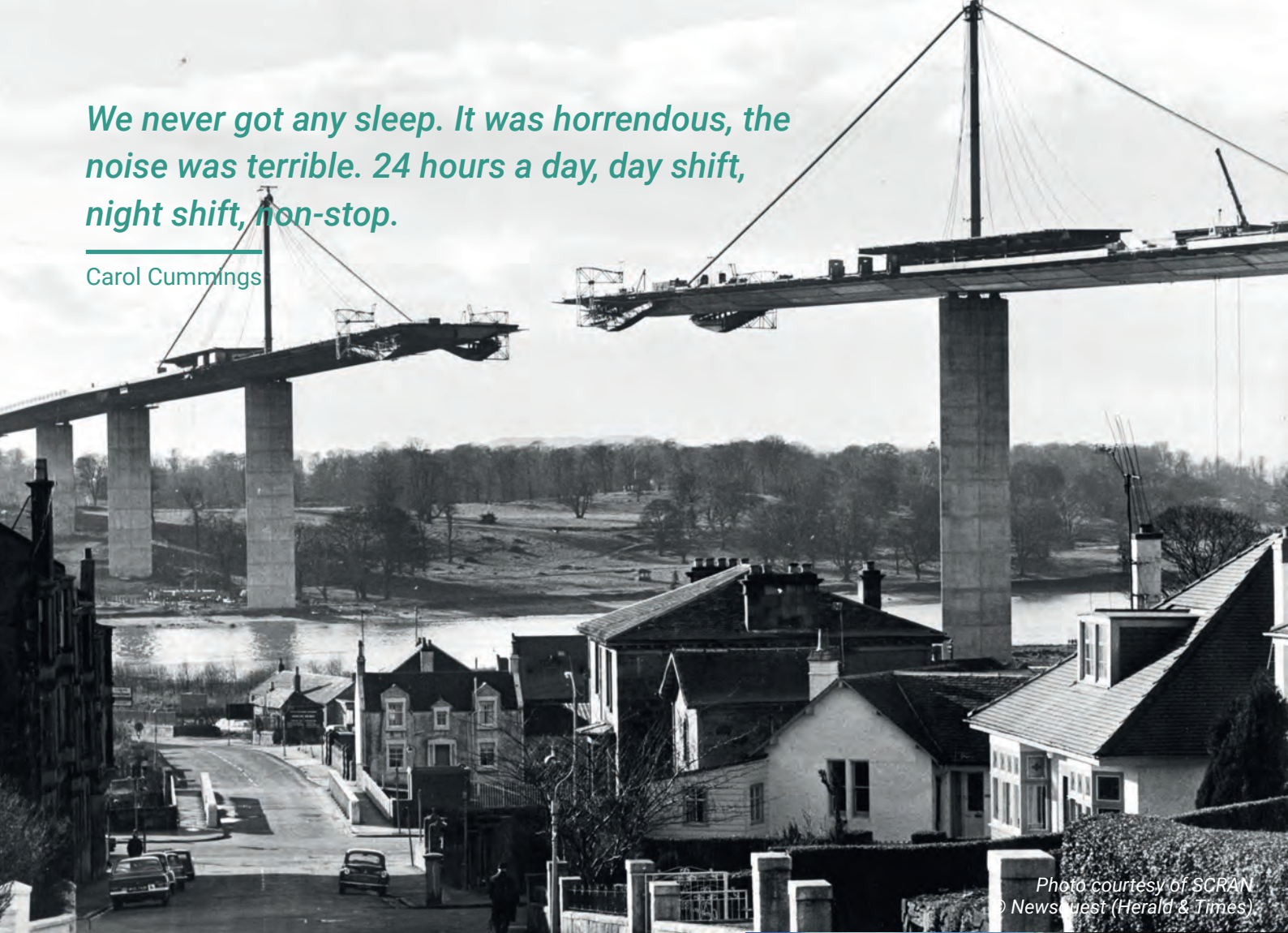
OUR BRIDGE

Kenny MacKenzie

“ Being a west-coaster there is always that kind of rivalry with the east coasters and Edinburgh in particular. And they had the Forth Road Bridge so this was our wee bit of civil engineering that matched the Forth Road Bridge - possibly not in scale but certainly in technical development. It's quite a unique construction.

We never got any sleep. It was horrendous, the noise was terrible. 24 hours a day, day shift, night shift, non-stop.

Carol Cummings



*Photo courtesy of SCRAM
Newsagent (Herald & Times)*

IT WAS A NICE NIGHT

Florence Boyle

Before it was open to traffic, they opened the bridge to pedestrians, just that night, so she [Princess Anne] was there whatever day it was and that evening you were allowed to walk across it. My father came up and we all walked across and back and had a look at the view... I remember it being a nice night.



*Photo courtesy
of Douglass
Montgomery*

ERSKINE FERRY

CROSS THE FERRY FOR A PENNY

John Hood

You could cross on the Ferry for a penny (several times back and forth if you could avoid the ticket collector). At the foot of Ferry Road on the stone cobbled wet slipway was the little wooden ticket office for the ferry with its two-way turnstile system which segregated the foot passengers from the vehicle traffic. In the early evening the newspaper vendors would stand here selling papers. Waiting ferry passengers had to watch that they avoided the moving chains that whipped up and down. The ferry was also used by 'tattie howkers' (such as myself) crossing over to the farms in Bishopton.

CHAIN FERRY

Jim McCall

“ I think people were sad to see the ferry go. We knew the people who worked on the ferry and it was gainful employment and people who were employed had worked on the ferry for many, many years. So it was kind of sad to see it... I think it was only about a penny or tuppence to get across. But it was a marvellous mode of travel... chain ferry – just to watch the chains pulling through the water and then the water drenching from these huge large chains. And of course as it got nearer the slipway the chains would tension

so they always warned you to stay away from the chain because as it got to the slipway the chain would rise from the water and it would be quite a thump – exciting!

BUSY FERRY

Ken Miller

“ And of course, the ferry was very, very busy, particularly on hot summer days. There were lots and lots of cars. They queued right along the middle of the road, past the café, and then down Ferry Road. So, the café did remarkably well. The petrol station must have been ok because people wouldn't judge the correct amount of fuel for the length of time in the queue. At the other side, they had marker posts, like milestones, and they would say 40 minutes, 30 minutes, 20 minutes and so on but you had no knowledge here. Bert in the café did very well because you would send the kids in and out.

ROWING TO WORK

Elma Robertson

“ My grandmother used to live on the other side [...] my father always said he was an incomer [to Old Kilpatrick] because he didn't come to live here until he was two but my granny lived on the other side of the Clyde and my grandfather used to work in the sewage works: he drove the engine there, the train. And my granny was telling us one of the

times she used to row him across to his work in the morning. And one of the times she was rowing across or rowing back and this fishing boat was coming along and they kept blowing the klaxon at her and she was getting madder and madder and signalling to them and then she realised they were calling to her. So it was a herring boat and when they came close to her they said 'have you got a bucket or anything in there?' and she said 'yes' and they said 'well give me it over' and he filled her bucket with herring. But when we thought on it... imagine, rowing your father across to work and back. But she was another tough one, the two grannies were tough ladies.

GOING TO ANOTHER WORLD

Steve Woods

The ferry was fascinating, it was like going to another world, not because Erskine and the countryside on the other side of the river was really different, but it just seemed to have a mystery to it since we could only look at it and not touch it.

TATTIE HOWKING

Jim Kirkpatrick

“ We all had done tattie howking, at tattie season, we used to go along to Erskine Ferry and line up and a farmer would come across from the other side of the river and pick his

boys, going across on the ferry first thing in the morning and you got taken out to the fields and you lifted potatoes, got taken to the family yard at lunchtime and you could boil potatoes and milk and back. Then they brought you back to the ferry at 5 o'clock, all for the princely sum of 2 shilling and a sixpence per day.

OIL IN THE RIVER

Lucinda McGinty

“ I don't know whether it was a halfpenny or a penny, you went across on the ferry and it was a

picnic – that was a great place for Sunday school trips, not for our church but a lot of Sunday school trips used to go there and there was a bit of beach and then there was beach further along. We all used to play in the water but when we got home we were covered in oil because the ships were still going up and down, the shipyards were busy, and there was oil and you had oil on your feet and oil on your legs and you had to get scrubbed. It was a nicer beach but when you went in the water it was still oily.



Photo courtesy of SCRAN
© Scottish Life Archive



Photo courtesy of Douglass Montgomery

The ferry was fascinating, it was like going to another world, not because Erskine and the countryside on the other side of the river was really different, but it just seemed to have a mystery to it since we could only look at it and not touch it.

The Clyde was originally a shallow river which could be forded at low tides and was strategically important to the Romans, who placed stepping stones to make crossings easier. In the 1770s a deep channel was cut to allow bigger vessels upstream to Glasgow.

A slipway for the new ferry was constructed which commenced operation in 1777. Initially the ferry was a punt. From 1832 to 1860 it was a hand-pulled chain and 1860 saw the first steam powered ferry boat.

Until 1904 it was maintained by Lord Blantyre when Clyde Navigation trust took over.

The Erskine Bridge opened in 1971 and the ferry ceased at midnight on 2nd July that year.



Photo courtesy of SCRAN
© Bob Pritchard

Photo courtesy of West Dunbartonshire
Council Libraries & Cultural Services

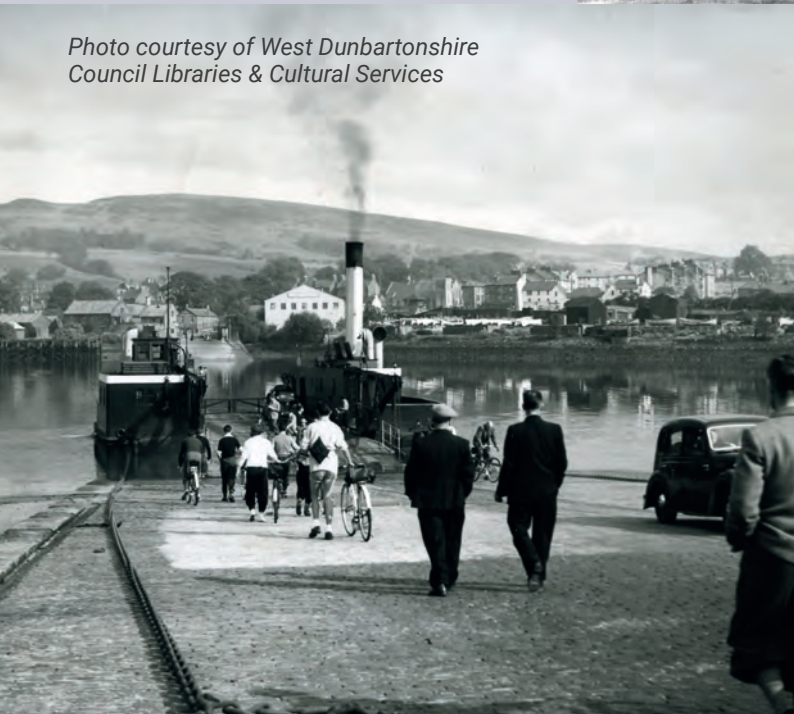


Photo courtesy of West Dunbartonshire
Council Libraries & Cultural Services





Photo courtesy of SCRAN
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SCOUT HALL

THE BUILDING

Owen Sayers

“ Originally, that building [the current Scout Hall] was owned by two sisters, the Gentles, and it was Jennie Gentle’s café for... no, Jennie Gentles’ tearoom for something ladies or something like that... they used to have little tea dances in the hall at the back and there was like a tearoom café downstairs. But, they had given it up and it had been taken over by a carpentry business and they’d used the front part as offices and the back part had all the machinery for the woodworking that they did. So, that was all away when we [the Scouts] were offered this. The house was used by the people building the bridge so the idea was that when the bridge was finished they would give us the house in payment for the land and the house that belonged to the Scout group. [It] wasn’t fit for purpose so they eventually agreed to demolish the hall and put up a Marley building for us which was fine but the Marley building wasn’t attached to the hall so I then negotiated with them to put a connecting part between the hall and the house which is still there.

THE PETROL STATION

Ken Miller

“ The Shell petrol station. It was their white suits/coats with the Shell motif on them. Most people

don’t realise that the Scout Hall was a petrol station. Obviously there were a lot of cars passing back and forwards from the ferry and if the queues were long and people were running low on fuel, obviously the petrol station paid. After the bridge was opened, there wasn’t point in a petrol station being there.

DROPPED KERB

Owen Sayers

“ When the carpenters moved out of the Scout Hall it was taken over by a small firm that had it as a petrol garage for cars going down to the ferry to fill up. And if you look at the land going down the road there you’ll see that the kerb was dropped in two places so cars could come in and out or if they were coming off the ferry they could come in and out.

TABLET AND CAKES

Owen Sayers

“ I remember it was a great source of income to the Scout Group when we moved in in 1968. I used to make tablet about two or three nights a week, all sorts of different tablet and ladies would bake cakes and we’d go down... because there were big queues for the ferry that used to stretch right through the village... and we used to go out and sell tablet and cakes to the waiting people, waiting to go on the ferry. It was a great source of income for many years.

THE AURORA LAMP FACTORY

The Aurora Lamp Factory was established in Old Kilpatrick in 1932. Old maps show that it was adjacent to the Gentles canteen which is now the Scout Hall. It was Scotland’s first electric bulb manufacturer, from 1932 to the mid 1950s. It was claimed that the bulbs lasted for 15 years, due to the high quality filaments that were used. The factory was important to the war effort during WWII. In March 1941, it suffered damage at the hands of the enemy during the Blitz but recovered 80% production within 7 months. Eventually, it lost trade to cheap imports that, unfortunately, only lasted a fraction of the time. One memory puts its closure date at 1956.

As we grew up, into our teens, believe it or not [my mother] got a job at the Aurora Lamp Works down Ferry Road. And My Dad wasn’t very pleased when she told him that she was going to get a job. She said “well, a wee bit of extra money won’t go amiss so I’m taking the job”.

Anne Alexander

OLD TRAIN STATION

THE OLD STATION

Steve Woods

“ It was just on the other side of the canal: so you have Roman Crescent, the canal and then the old railway track. I remember it but don't have any strong memories of it. I remember going with Gordon and his family and with my own family occasionally to Helensburgh and we would have gone on the old railway. I do remember being in Old Kilpatrick Railway Station which was the one down Ferry Road, I remember boarding the train there, but also because the lady who ran the ticket office or the station was a lady called Mary Hoy who was a close friend of my mother, so we used to go down there and see her... I have a clear memory of the railway station and the trains going up and down but it would have been a rare treat for us to have gone on the train.

COAL FOR YOUR FIRE

Maggie Larkin

My mother in law told me stories about when the railway was down the bottom so you had the two railway lines when you were a bit hard up at the end of the week for coal for the fire, if you went down when the train was passing and held your bucket up the guys would give you a shovel of coal off the train

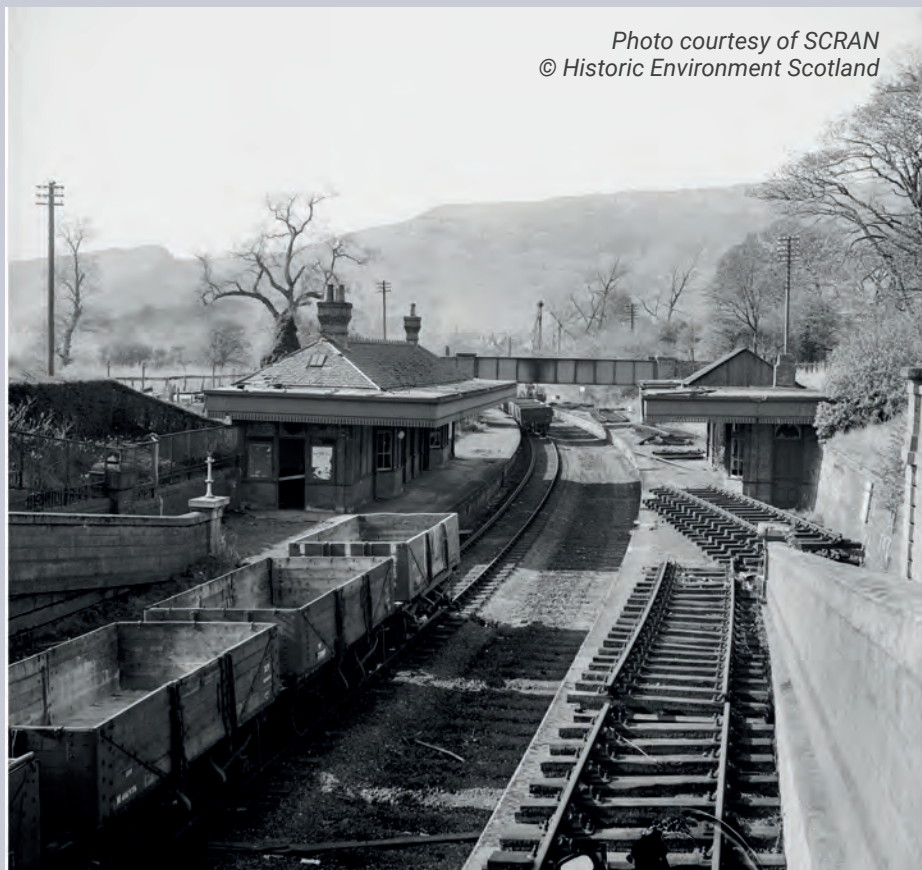
into your bucket and that kept your fire burning till you got your man's wages.

STEAM TRAINS

Jim McCall

“ Well, obviously we could see the steam train: we heard it before you saw it, belching out steam. The most marked instance was when the swing bridge would open to let the canal traffic through underneath it. But I do recollect seeing the

train crossing the swing bridge at Bowling Harbour. It was probably in the early 50s – I don't know when it actually closed; but I remember the low level station still being open. Beeching closed it – so it'd be in the early 60s. We took them for granted – you would hear the train. I remember getting on to the third class carriage and it belching out smoke. And then you got the advent of the electric train and that was quite a change.



*Photo courtesy of SCRAN
© Historic Environment Scotland*

BARCLAY CHURCH

THE CHURCH

John Hood

“ The old Barclay Church was demolished in 1933 as it was in poor condition and replaced with a new building opened in December 1936. It was subsequently blitz damaged, closed and re-opened in 1944. It was that church that I attended although I was not there when it was damaged in the 1968 gale and never re-opened. At that time we also used the old Mission Hall for Sunday school purposes and social events. When the second church blew down this building was substantially improved to act as a temporary church.

THE GREAT STORM

Rona Mirren

“ When we stayed in the glen there was a storm, it must have been maybe about between 1964 maybe about 1966 - 68 and the Barclay church got blown down. The Barclay church, the one where there are houses now. And we stayed in the glen at that point and the trees were falling around about us and thankfully we never got hit but they were close. But they were really close when the trees were

falling because of the storm. [Can you remember it?] Well, actually I slept right through it, actually, that's what my mother said 'never seen anybody sleep through anything like that in my life.' They were terrified, they were up and I slept through the whole lot of it and it was when I got up the next morning to go to school that I saw all the devastation and all the trees lying and I said 'oh, what happened?'

THE DESTRUCTION WAS TERRIBLE

Myra Mackenzie

“ But see the next day [after the storm] when we got up, see the destruction! There was trees down, roofs blown off. See when I saw the church, I could not believe it, the whole church collapsed. I mean the destruction was terrible. But we had a few broken panes, you know. I think the wind was throwing things. So, we all just sat in the living room away back from the windows, played music and that because I didn't want to frighten the kids and played at silly games to take their minds off it. I can remember that night as though it was yesterday. Horrendous night.

The Barclay church was on the corner of Main Street and Barclay Street, with the manse behind.

It was originally built in Gothic style and was initially called the Old Kilpatrick Free Church, but after the death of the minister Matthew Barclay in 1865, the church was renamed after him.

It was replaced with a new church in 1936 which was then damaged by the gales of 1968 and demolished. A block of flats was built in its place.

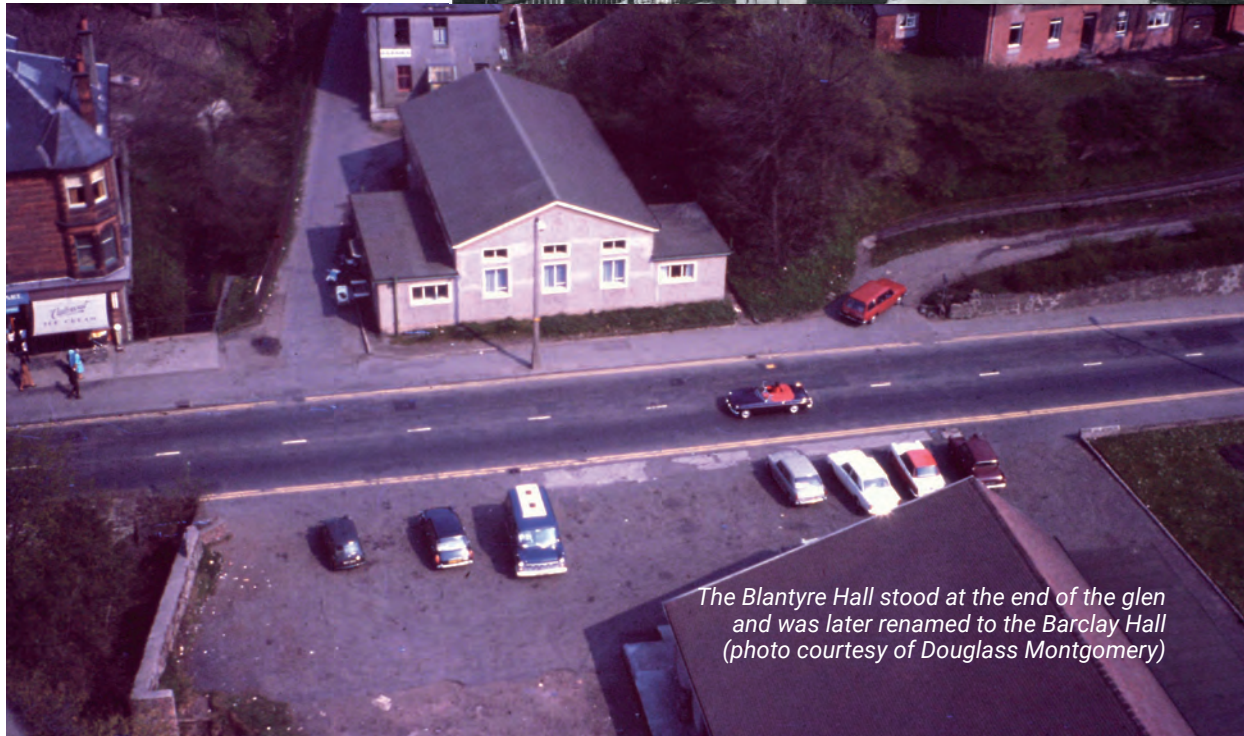
When I saw the church, I could not believe it, the whole church collapsed. I mean the destruction was terrible.



Top: original Barclay Church (named after Revd Matthew Barclay, built in 1843)

Right: Barclay Church in the 1960s

Photos courtesy of West Dunbartonshire Council Libraries & Cultural Services



The Blantyre Hall stood at the end of the glen and was later renamed to the Barclay Hall (photo courtesy of Douglass Montgomery)

MEMORIES OF THE BLITZ

ANDERSON SHELTER

Anne Alexander

“ On the first night of the Blitz, when the siren went and, you know, you heard some gunfire, we went under the table in the kitchen basically and then it got more fierce and my Dad went out and went up Stuart Street into the pen and we all went there for a wee while but my Dad was getting a bit twitchy because he thought if there was a direct hit on the building above an awful lot of folk would be crushed. So, he decided at that point to take us along to my Grannie Hay’s Anderson shelter and of course it was, there was water, four or five inches of water in the Anderson shelter at that point but at least there was some more protection.

Dalnottar Terrace wasn’t damaged despite the fact that, you know, the second night of the blitz my Mum and Dad and Fay and me joined the rest of the Hay family in their Anderson shelter; because the men had spent the time they had the day before, before the Blitz, before the planes started to come over, and they’d taken all the water out of the Anderson shelter because it hadn’t been used up until then. And so the whole lot of us were squeezed into the Anderson shelter.

I can’t remember whether it was the first night or the second night, I’ve got a feeling it was the second night, but

you saw them, you know the moon was shining and you could see them in formation coming up the Clyde and obviously heading for the factories, the shipyards, in Clydebank and the oil tanks at Dalnottar.

THEY MISTOOK THE BOULEVARD FOR THE CLYDE

Carol Cummings

“ I remember one of the times my Dad said ‘we’ll just sit in the hall, close the doors and we’ll sit in the hall, we’ll be quite safe here.’ The wardens came and put us out. And there was a big shelter in the park [at the top of Stuart Avenue] for everybody and we were running down there and God I can see it yet – the tracer bullets and the bombs dropping – I was terrified. That was because my Dad said we’d be fine just stay in the house but they put us out... and at the end of the avenue there was a field with swings in it and the shelter was down there, it was a great big shelter... And if the Germans hadn’t mistook the Boulevard for the Clyde we wouldn’t be here. They were aiming for all the tanks, the oil tanks and it was a lovely bright night and they mistook the Boulevard for the Clyde.

OIL TANKS

June Alderdice

“ During the Blitz the night that the tanks got... I know there was one tank got bombed anyway for it was

on fire... but they let the oil out. I don’t know if it was deliberate or by accident so therefore it ruined the bank at this side, all the oil gathered; but that was another thing: families went down on to the shore at this side too before the Blitz happened, because the sand was lovely right all the way down to Bowling, but then the oil got on to the sand...

THE MOSAIC AT THE FERRY

Elma Robertson

“ ...and that’s one thing I remember about the Blitz. My youngest aunt took me after the Blitz, it would have been a few days after it, and we went down the Ferry Road and the waiting room had been on fire and I was intrigued by the fact that it was one of those pedestal weighing machines with all the little mosaic tiles on the base of it and I was fascinated by the fact that the heat had made a few of these pop out and they were lying on the floor, the wee squares, the mosaic squares I always remember that.

BOMBS ON THE BOULEVARD

Ken Miller

“ I can also tell you one story about the night of the Blitz, [the gentleman who lived here] with his father at that point. He had his wife and his two boys, so the five of them were in this house the night of the Blitz and a bomb went off on the Boulevard directly behind the house. It blew out

the back windows and it blew down, the blast blew down the centre wall between the back sitting room and the front lounge. Then the crater that the bomb had left on the road up there, a bus full of nurses came along and went in the hole and it's because they didn't have headlights or anything, because of the blackout. They were being transferred from one hospital to another.

BOMB IN THE BATH

Owen Sayers

“ Well, the houses were built prior to the war obviously and it was only when the war happened that the area was deemed to be a potential target; and it was targeted. There's an aerial photograph of this area of the oil tanks taken by the Germans

for targeting purposes. Indeed, one of the houses round the corner from Admiralty House and the Chief Engineer, a guy called MacKay, a bomb went down through the roof of their house and landed in the bath but didn't explode.

THE EVACUATION

Lucinda McGinty

“ My mother went to Dunoon with me wrapped in a blanket; she'd her nightdress on and her fur coat and a pair of slippers, and the Air Raid Warden had come up to get her out because I was only 3 month old at the Clydebank Blitz.

I think nearly all the women had fur coats then – this big musquash coat with a great big collar, I always

remember it; and she was going to the air raid shelter and she looked back – the bombers were coming across – and she looked back, she says... it was an incendiary went through the roof so all the furniture was going up in the air and she lost everything. I was wrapped in this blanket.

Then she went to Dunoon because my uncle stayed there. We stayed with them

for a while; and I was christened there. Then we went back – I don't remember the house being bombed but it was all fixed up. Nobody had any furniture and it was all bits and pieces. It was a room and kitchen, as we called it. It was safe to go back.

AN UNEXPLODED BOMB

Tom Morrison

“ This must have been, say, in 1975, and I'm in an office across the road in the workshops, and one of the chaps come in and he says “I've got a wee boy here he says he's found a bomb”. This wee lad came out – he was maybe about ten or eleven, something like that. And I said “Where have you seen this bomb, son?” and he said “It's on the road up to the boulevard” I said “Up the private road?” And he said “yes” I said “climb into this Landrover”. So we got into the Landrover and we drove up the road. Just before we got to the old bridge above the railway he says “there - it's there on the right hand side”. And there was this big bomb sticking out the earth, with the fins and everything on it! And I said “right son, okay” and I came down the road, and got a couple of our chaps to block the bottom of the road so nobody could come up, and I phoned the local police at Clydebank and said “look this is the oil fuel depot. We have a bomb, we need the bomb disposal people” and they did come up and they did remove the bomb. I believe the young lad got a citation.



Photo courtesy of SCRAN
© Historic Environment Scotland

UNDER THE BRIDGE

RIBBONS FOR YOUR HAIR

Carol Mackenzie

“ There was a wee Co-operative and there was a fish mongers and you would go to the Co-operative and it had old fashioned drawers, wooden drawers with glass panels at the front and they would pull them out and you used to go there and buy ribbons for your hair, because I had long hair and you’d buy ribbons for your hair for school. And you would get your school uniform and that’s where you got your school uniform for Gavinburn. It was like a tie and different things if you bought stuff for school. This was mainly the seventies I would say. And at the corner there was fishmongers with a window but now it’s a flat. And the Co-operative is a flat. There was a hairdresser’s there which is now still a hairdresser’s. It’s changed hands a few times but that was there as well it’s still there.

LAZZERINI’S

Carol Mackenzie

“ I went in to Lazzerini’s as it was. They had good ice cream. My friend she always used to get sent on a Sunday for her Mum. She stayed on Dalnottar Hill Road and she would come through the Glen to get ice cream on a Sunday and then she would go back up. I did go in when I was younger, when I was wee,

and then when I didn’t live in the village but I used to come and visit my friends, we’d come down and we’d go into the café. It was old fashioned style booths. You’d go in and on the left-hand side were all the booths, red booths, with the counter at the right hand side. And you would buy things and meet your friends in there.

THE CHAPEL

Steve Woods

“ I was in my late teens, 17 or 18, when they started digging the foundations of the bridge. I don’t clearly remember the early part of the construction... except my parents were quite excited because the Chapel had been able to sell some ground that they had. The Catholic Church in those days was a wooden hut, and they were quite excited because the selling of some ground for the construction of the bridge enabled them to start a building fund which resulted some years later when they had enough money to build a proper church.

POST OFFICE FUNDED BY DAVIE GRAHAM

Eddie McDade

“ It was different times because there was odd occasions when things would happen. Our post office being small wasn’t self-sufficient

in money and we would have it delivered by a security company, whereas the big ones like Clydebank – all the shops pay in to them and they’ve got money all the time.

And occasionally things would happen – the van wouldn’t turn up on time or whatever and I had seen going out and going up to Davie Graham’s and saying: “can you lend me three or four hundred quid and I will give it back to you when the van comes” and they would just unhesitatingly say: “there you are, Eddie”, [they would] just give you three or four hundred quid. It was quite a lot of money just to hand out to somebody. But they all knew me and they knew I wasn’t going to scoodle off with it or anything like that.

POST OFFICE HOLD UP

Eddie McDade

“ We were held up... I got a certificate from the Post Office for my bravery – for hiding behind the counter! A guy with a gun and a guy with a knife come in and tried to rob us. What happened was they come out and run up the glen, and one of our customers who didn’t live in the village, at that time he had a four-wheeled drive Jeep which was a rarity at that time – he’d seen them coming running out with boiler

ADMIRALTY & FREELANDS

OIL TANKS

Jim McCall

“ The other area you had the Admiralty at Old Kilpatrick for the fuel depot, and they had an admin building; we called it the Admiralty. It was Government owned and obviously there were these huge fuel tanks, they were part of the war effort and they were heavily camouflaged. Some of them were still a pretty dominant feature of the landscape above Old Kilpatrick – all the new housing estate is built where the fuel depot was.

THE ROUNDABOUT

June Alderdice

“ With building the new estate at the end where Freelands is, it was surprising that Old Kilpatrick has got a roundabout because older people like me'll think “Oh my goodness, straight road through” but a roundabout at the end of Old Kilpatrick! I thought that was quite something!

*Aerial view of Old Kilpatrick with oil tanks
(photo courtesy of NCAP, © HES)*

suits on and he thought “what are they doing?” And when they ran up, he slowly followed them up and he seen them getting into a parked car up Glen Road – there was another guy waiting in a car up Glen Road with a mobile phone which was a rarity in those days as well – and he phoned the police. They got the car over where Dalnottar House used to be – they parked it in there. And another lady, she was standing dusting at the windows she seen these three guys getting out and taking their clothes off – they were taking their boiler suits off, and she

though “oh”. They left the car and just went away. And a minute later there was police everywhere, so she went out and says: “ooh what's happened?” It was the talk of the village for a long time after that. It was an experience; but it doesn't seem to have affected me; I mean the guy who pointed the gun – I found out later on it was loaded – it was a real gun. But he didn't even get to say 'hand over the money' because when I saw it, I grabbed Elsie and got her on the floor.



1796

THE ETTRICK & THE SHOPS

TOUR OF THE THREE LOCHS

Billy Forsyth

“ On occasion, we would go down to The Ettrick, and The Telstar, and The Glen Lusset (or the Grapes, as it was called)... we used to say, if we were going to the three pubs, that we were “going on a tour of the three lochs”.

THE TENEMENT

Kenny McKenzie

“ [The Ettrick] was actually a tenement with the public house commanding the breadth of the ground floor. So there was doors at either side of the bar... and there was ongoing works if I remember correctly and the pub didn't close whilst the conversion was ongoing but the tenement above was systematically removed and then the architects got into it and sculpted the shape of it as it is today. I always think that the lower half is underneath the façade... it will still be the original tenement to some extent.



Photo courtesy of Stuart McMillan



Photo courtesy of Douglass Montgomery

PIRIE THE CHEMIST

Irene Haworth

“ I started when I was 15. It still had the big, old, long wooden counter with the glass cases underneath it and the old drawers with all the names on it. That's the old scales out the chemists, see the brass scales. We used to use them but latterly we couldn't use, weren't allowed to use them, them because the weights weren't right and you couldn't clean them when you used them. When it was busy you got to know everybody. In those days the dispensing was really the old type dispensing. You know, you had to make up ointments, make up powders for headaches, make up everything and I believe, before my

time, when my Grandad was in at first you used to pull teeth. During the war, you used to make stain for your legs because you couldn't afford, there was no nylons and stuff like that. It was busy enough for two full timers on the counter. In those days folk would come in every week. Nowadays you go to the supermarket and you buy everything, but in those days you came into the chemists and you got your toilet paper, your paper hankies, everything like that. And I always remember the Clydebank Fair because everybody came in. "Oh, we're going away our holidays" and they all got their stuff. They would stop early and would go into one of the pubs for a drink because

the Clydebank Fair had started. In those days the pubs shut at half two and they'd come in and get all their summer stuff. It was great. I used to love it.

HAM AND EGG BUSINESS

Florence Boyle

“ My great grandfather had a ham and egg business and he had delivery in the village and owned property I think, where the shops are now, at Thistleneuk, because in the census it's referred to as McLaughlin's land and that was my family's name. And I heard stories of them... had a bit of a pony and trap, used to deliver out to places like Lenzie and all these places.



*A set of scales from Pirie's chemist
(photo courtesy of Irene Haworth, nee Pirie)*

*Gala days and celebrations in the village
(photos courtesy of Elma Robertson and
Isobel Plunkett)*



THE COMMUNITY

THE CORONATION GALA

Jim McCall

“ There was a Gala date, the Coronation, all the kids got dressed up – it was a big fancy dress parade. I was dressed as a jockey – jodhpurs, jockey hat, and we were taken to the High Lusset and we paraded round there, it was a beautiful sunny day, it was too hot but there were some spectacular costumes. And we were given a coronation mug (which I still have) and a chocolate crown – that was a big treat, a chocolate crown!

The houses were festooned with bunting – lots of people had coloured lights, photographs, pictures of the Queen with lighted bulbs round them, and we had communal parties for the children and all the neighbours put all their tables laid out in the back garden with sandwiches and cake and lemonade.

HAPPY TIMES

Carol Mackenzie

“ I remember the gala days as well....they used to have the [gala] days and things like that in the school, sorry, in the village. Nice gala days. Just happy times. A nice place to grow up, Old Kilpatrick, people were friendly, people knew each other as well. A lot of people still

stay in the village that were brought up in the village or they come back to it to send their children to the school there as well. They maybe don't live in the village but they still send their children to the school.

MITCHELL TERRACE PARTY

Jim Dunbar

“ I have a vague memory, at the end of the war there was a sort of a street sort of thing at night along where Mitchell Terrace was – roughly where the old folks home is now - and they had it out there, Armstrong's shop was the other side and the petrol station. The party was when I was about seven or eight and running about and crackers going off and fireworks... it would be VE day, I think... that was a very memorable event to me. Of course, there wasn't that much traffic about those days and the whole street just stopped because of that. That was a very memorable night to me, at that age up so late, running up! There was dancing, people were dancing on the street.

DRESSING UP

Evelyn Campbell

“ At the Coronation, one of the girls dressed up as the Queen and we dressed up as train bearers and paraded round the area (to celebrate the coronation).

THE GALA DAYS

David Stormonth

“ Billy Connolly even opened the first Gala day in the village. At that time he was an up and coming star, with the yellow banana boots on, and he was there all day, talking to people and joking. That happened once a year. There was a whole gala week everybody would get involved the Boys Brigade, the churches, the Girls Brigade, the Scouts, the football teams – everybody got involved in the whole village.

QUEEN ELIZABETH 2

Myra Mackenzie

“ The Queen came over [to launch the ship]. So, we all went over. So, she was coming over this side to go and launch the boat. Princess Anne was there as well and Charles. Anyway, she came off the ferry. She was in a big limousine. My Mum was there an'aw and we had all these wee Union Jacks and she was as close as I was to you. But see when [the ship] made its maiden voyage down, the whole of Gavinburn School came out, down Portpatrick Road, and I do not know how that [made it]. It took the whole width of the Clyde and you could actually have went like that and think you could touch it. I'd never saw a ship that size in my life.

AUDIO WALK 2

This walk starts in the village centre and takes the walker along Dumbarton Road in the opposite direction to Audio walk 1, towards the bridge, through the Lusset Glen and round the Lusset park, through Kilpatrick train station, down Station Road and back to the start at the village shops.

The walk is about a mile long and the route is indicated here. The recording can be paused and restarted to fit with your walking speed.

The points marked on the map give an indication of the topics you can read about in this booklet and hear in the recording.

The audio walk recording can be downloaded from www.awalkthroughthepast.org.uk as an mp3 file and can be played on any smartpone, tablet or mp3 player.



START HERE

5

6

4

3

1

2

1. Glen Cafe and Glen Lusset
2. Lusset Glen
3. High/Lusset Park
4. The railway
5. Kilpatrick Hills
6. Station Road

GLEN CAFE & GLEN LUSSET

THE GRAPES

Owen Sayers

“ Well, the Lusset was the Grapes. Where the car park is there was a big red sandstone tenement there and the Grapes pub was on the ground floor of that and if you went round to the other side of that tenement on the ground floor was Andy Capps [who] had his barber shop and then if you went round the back of that building there were stairs that went up to the houses and there was a cobblers in there and that was a Mr Apps. So you had Capps the barber and Apps the cobbler.

ANY GUM, CHUM?

Sheena Johnston

“ I’ve always had a thing for chewing gum. And the other memory I’ve got is sitting on the wall where the cenotaph is and there would be boats in with sailors, like American sailors coming off into the village, and we would say “any gum chum?” because I was so dead keen to get chewing gum.

POKEY HATS

Irene Haworth

“ We’d go into the café, Bertie Lazzerini, and get a pokey hat and a bar of Caramac. That was our Sunday treat. A pokey hat, you don’t hear that nowadays, sure you don’t.

RIGHT, AWAY YOU GO!

Lucinda McGinty

“ We all used to sit in there when we were about sixteen on a Sunday night; sometimes we only had enough for one drink between us all – a hot orange drink and we would all pass it round maybe about three of us were having a sip each of this hot orange and then Bertie would get ratty because we were just buying one drink between four of us. There was no coffees – not anybody drank coffee then, it was hot orange or lemonade or if you were rich you had an iced drink. And that’s where we spent our Sunday nights in there, down at the Glen Cafe and then he would throw us all out at eight o’clock “RIGHT, away you go!” and we’d all have to go. Well that’s when he shut – at eight o’clock.

ALL OUT OF BERTIE’S

Irene Haworth

“ In the door, counter was on the right hand side and on the left hand side there were like bench seats and I’m sure there was a jukebox at one point. But Bertie, oh he was a bad-tempered man. One time, it was a rainy day, and the cafe had steamed up, the windows, and I rubbed the windows and he shouted “I’ve just cleaned those windows. What do you think you’re doing?” He

wasn’t children friendly. But we used to go and get a lovely, you know, fancy ice cream dishes and we’d get raspberry on our ice cream. The ice cream, I think it was his Dad’s or his Uncle’s recipe. It was a well kept secret. It really was lovely ice cream. And I can remember, used to have the loveliest, at Easter time, lovely big Easter eggs in boxes. And then at Christmas lovely boxes of chocolates. My Dad would go and buy us a lovely big Easter egg or for my Mum a beautiful, big, fancy box of chocolates. It was all out of Bertie’s.

Bertie Lazzerini, who owned the Glen Cafe was the son of Torello and Quintilla Lazzerini.

When WWI broke out, Torello returned to Italy to join up. He was killed in action in 1917 leaving a widow Quintilla and a young son Bertie.

Bertie later owned and ran the Glen Café for many years, directly across the road from the memorial where his father is remembered.

LUSSET GLEN

MOTORWAYS CUT A LOT OF THE GOOD BITS AWAY

George Mirren

“ The Glen itself, as I would say... all these motorways coming in they cut a lot of the good bits away, if you know what I mean, and they put all these cement buildings and frameworks up, you know. Because on the Boulevard there, as you passed Dalnottar coming down the way, going Dumbarton way, you had that wee road that took you into Station Road here, you never had need for these big walls on the sides, that was all done to hold the bankings up because of the motorways and different things, you see.

ALWAYS UP THE GLEN

Elma Robertson

“ We played up the glen, we were always up the glen, there used to be swings in the glen and the maypole and there was a paddling pool but we weren't allowed to go in it because bad boys were always throwing bottles into it and there was broken glass in the paddling pool... that was on the left as you go up through the glen and across the little bridge – along that side was the paddling pool. I don't know if the remnants are still there – and then we used to play at jumping the burn and we were always having picnics

in those days, a bottle of lemonade and my mother would make us a piece and jam and that was a picnic, you know, there was a group of us.

REALLY, REALLY GOOD FUN

Irene Haworth

“ Just playing in the burn and having great fun. I think there used to be an old paddling pool but it was done away with years ago. And just really having great fun and being away from the house. Even though it was just along the road but we could have freedom and nobody had to bother about, you know, you just went out and played. We played hide and seek with the trees and built wee dens. It was great; it was really, really good fun.

FAVOURITE SPOT WITH THE OLD KILPATRICK KIDS

Jim McCall

“ We had a paddling pool in the glen. It was a fair sizeable pool. The glen was a favourite spot certainly in good weather. We had the Glen Cafe that's still there. It was Lazzerini – Italian people who had it. There was the mother, Bertie Lazzerini – they had it for a couple of generations. We would get an ice cream and go in to the glen and have a paddle. It was a favourite spot with the Old Kilpatrick kids. Good memories of

that time. It was heavily wooded with very very old trees at that time.

GREAT PLACE TO GO AND JUST PLAY

June Alderdice

“ There was a Mr Sanny Bell, he lived in the wee cottage, the Station Road end, and I think he was in charge of the men that kept the glen in good condition. The burn was lovely: clear and natural and it was a great place to go and just play – you know, run around the trees. My Mum took us as well for quite a spell for a wee picnic you know – it was lovely.

EVERYBODY USED TO GO IN THERE

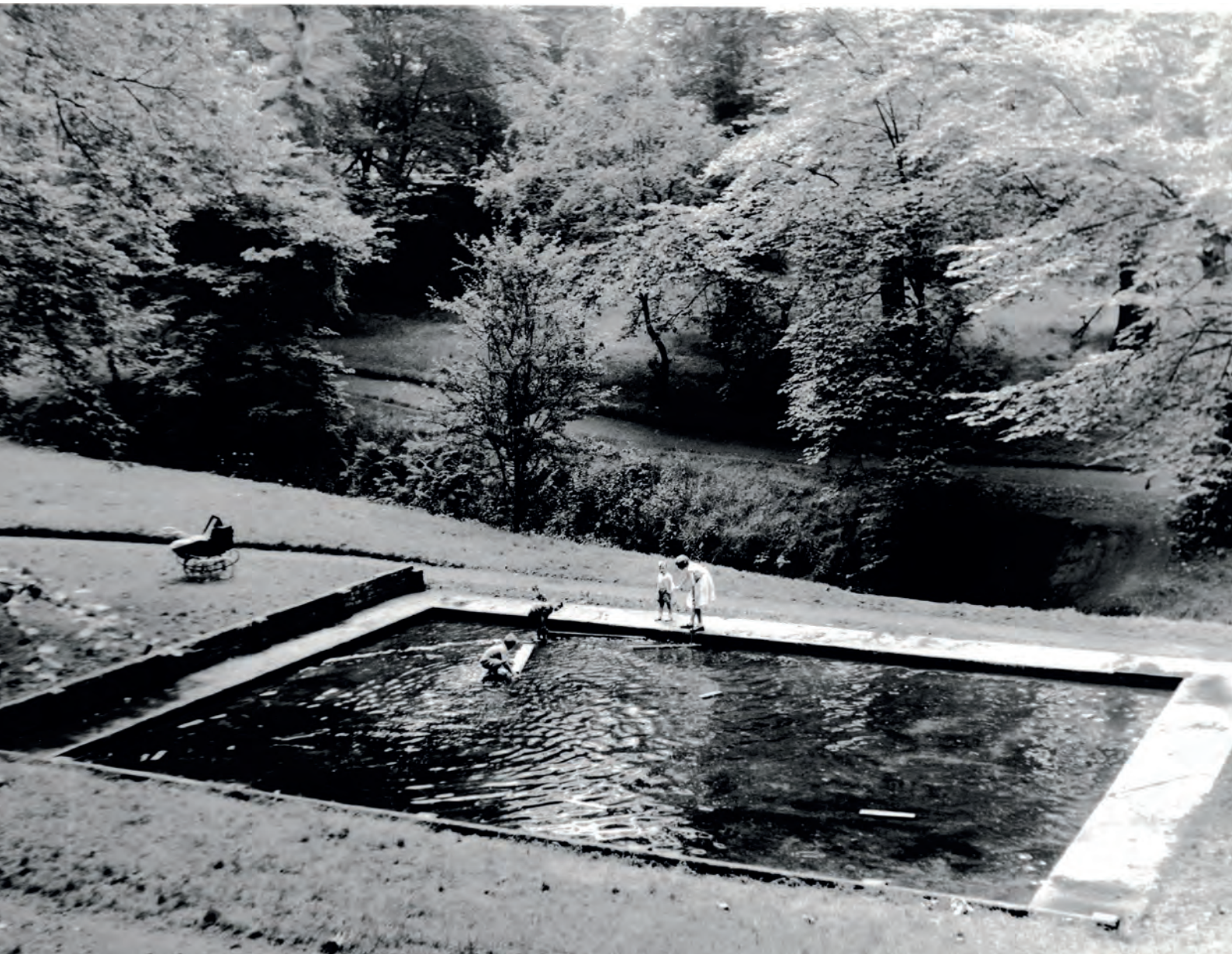
Myra Mackenzie

“ There used to be a wee pool in there at one time and we used to take them up there in their wee trunks and they'd have a wee swim. That was a lovely place believe it or not at one time. Although it was quite shaded you know with all the trees but it was a lovely, lovely place to take them. I'd forgot about that. Everybody used to go in there and take wee picnics. The squirrels used to come down and you'd take stuff for them. The rabbits would be running about. That was really good up there.



*Photo courtesy of
Robert Fleming*

*Paddling pool in Lusset Glen
(photo courtesy of Robert Fleming)*



THE PADDLING POOL

Owen Sayers

“ But the glen itself was a place that you played in constantly. The paddling pool was open in the summer. It was drained in the winter. But it used to be full in the hot weather, you know, and we seemed to get more hot weather in those days.

COTTAGE IN THE GLEN

George Mirren

“ Well, it’s all changed now but at the top entrance, my wife’s family [Cairney], her father had the house there, it was a wee cottage and the burn ran down the other side, there was a wee road went through and on the other side there was the burn and a bridge and it was like... he grew the vegetables there, her father and some of the men in the park used to go in and dig in the winter and get it all ready. And then the glen, as I say it’s all changed now... just as you come down Station Road just before you go round the corner into Station Road well there was an entrance there that took you up into the glen up to the hall, there was a road up there, a dirt road up there.

A BIT OF A DISAPPOINTMENT

Billy Forsyth

“ The paddling pool was always a bit of a disappointment... it was hardly ever filled with water, no matter what happened... we would always go down there hoping it would be filled... but it would never

ever be filled. There’s maybe two occasions I can remember in my life that we actually went down and were able to paddle in it. We used to paddle in the burn, then climb the trees at the burn as well.

SANNY BELL

Elma Robertson

“ Before you come to the railway tunnels you go across that little bridge and you walked back a bit and there was a roundabout there, there was a maypole and there were swings all round about there and I wouldn’t be surprised if there are still remnants. One man looked after the glen and he lived in that house and he had at the other side of the burn a big patch of ground where he had gooseberry bushes and a market garden practically. Sanny Bell was his name, again, he was friendly with my mother and father and the family and we used to get gooseberries when they were in season when we went up that way. He looked after the glen and it was in better nick with one man looking after it with a scythe and you daren’t misbehave if he was around because you could get told off. The same in the village here if the village policeman saw you and knew you... there were a few tearaways in the village and he would say to them ‘right, I know who you are and I’m going to have a word with your father or mother’, whatever the case would be and nobody would come back at him with ‘you’re picking on my boy’.

THE GHOST IN THE GLEN

David Stormonth

“ As a young boy we weren’t really allowed along the glen. I always remember stories of the school – they used to say that there was an old lady, a ghost, in the glen burn, just at the wee bridge. Did anybody believe it or not? I think there was a few youngsters believed it; down in the dark in the glen, because it was very dark. We used to go along as a school – we did some nature things through the glen: we would walk up through the glen and take the leaves off the trees and go back for a nature project; people from that end of the village would tell you the ghost stories that they’d heard about from their older brothers or whatever... They used to try and see if you could see the ghost. Nobody ever seen it though.

...we could have freedom and nobody had to bother about, you know, you just went out and played. We played hide and seek with the trees and built wee dens. It was great; it was really, really good fun.

LUSSET PARK

TENNIS AND CURLING

Ken Miller

“ Beside the bowling green, tennis courts were there. When you say curling rink everybody imagines a building with an ice rink inside it which couldn't be further from the truth. It was concrete and it was the full length of an ice [rink] and it had little walls so that water could be contained and then when it froze they had a curling rink. And it ran parallel with the railway line along towards the bridge and the tennis courts did similar.

BESIDE THE RAILWAY

George Mirren

“ See where the bowling green is, well along there, there was a couple of tennis courts there, this was just beside the railway, it was just off... the railway was on the one side and then you had the path and you had two tennis courts there... well that football pitch was turned because of the roads, it run the opposite way, because of that they had to turn the park because of the likes of maybe a football hitting a car and causing an accident. And you had

the big Lusset Hall there, a big thing, that was our bothy and we had a couple of huts where we kept our machinery.

THE SWING PARK

Rona Mirren

“ We used to play at tennis and cricket and we used to go up the park because there was still the old swing-park stuff: the big witches' hat, the big rocking horse and the swings, we used to go up there. That was at the other end of the glen near the railway station but on the left hand side, like at the end of the park, see how the bowling green is there and the other end of the park well that's where the swing park was, we played up there.

*The opening of the bowling green
(photo courtesy of Robert Fleming)*



THE HALL

Rona Mirren

“ There was a hall up at the top of the glen where the changing rooms are just now for the football teams, there was a big hall there. The Chapel used to run the Boys Guild from there and we always had the keys so they had to come to us, they had to come down the banking to get the key from us to open the hall and there always had to be somebody there because the Council let the hall out to the Sunday school picnics and they had groups of youngsters came and they had fun up there and they used the hall for their picnic and things like that.

THE PLAY GROUNDS

Billy Forsyth

The Old Kilpatrick High Park was actually quite good... The Lusset Hall and we also had, although I never played there, the tennis courts, and the bowling green, and they were quite quality places in their own right, at that particular time. They were quite a good standard, the play grounds and all that, above the glen and the High Park... all good entertainment for children.

DANCES

Billy Forsyth

We used to go to dances in the Lusset Hall, that actually had groups. They'd have dances up there... Probably, I'd have been about fourteen at the time...we'd go up to the dances and various gangs would be up there as well. We never really had any bother with anyone... everyone just understood what the code was.



*Young Elma, her mother and her grandfather with sister looking down at the village from the boulevard (A82)
(photo courtesy of Elma Robertson)*

*The north part of Lusset Glen was turned into the slip roads from the bridge onto the A82.
(photos courtesy of Douglass Montgomery)*

THE RAILWAY

THE TICKET OFFICE

Carol Mackenzie

“ Sometimes, if people came to visit us, we would go up to the train station, up at the back beside the bowling green, and you’d go and meet people off the train. It was different then because the train office was open and you would go in and, I’m sure it had a coal fire, it was quite old fashioned, Victorian, and you would go in there then all the tickets were laid out in front of the person that was selling tickets. Like all the different tickets labelled with destinations, so you had that.

THE WAITING ROOM

Owen Sayers

“ The waiting room... if you took the building as a whole the bit nearest the Station Road that was the ticket office and the ticket office had a window that came out onto the platform but if that was closed you could go inside and there was another glass window for getting your tickets at that. And then there was the waiting room itself which, if my memory serves me right, also had a coal fire in it which was lit in the winter. But it was well used.

THE BLUE TRAINS

Billy Forsyth

When I was at school, at Gavinburn school, the blue trains, as they were called then, the electric train, the line was just getting electrified. I think that must have been about 1958 or something like that. So before that, trains weren’t really a factor in travelling, you know, from Old Kilpatrick into Glasgow. It was always by bus, nobody had a car. That was the thing then, children had a lot of freedom and scope to be able to go lots of places. There were no cars ever to bother you, because nobody had a car. There was only one car in our end of Dalnottar Road, and that was the man’s who lived next door to us.

RAILWAY WOMEN

Maureen MacKeever

“ The railway were being coaxed into employing more women and I was only the second woman on the line between Helensburgh and Airdrie. So I started at Kilpatrick station in 1981 and I worked for 31 years on the railway until I retired. Kilpatrick station was quite unique because it had arched windows. It had a big waiting room, there

was also a back room whereby the coal was kept because it was coal fires. It was quite an ordeal for me to be lighting a fire every day, I hadn’t been used to that. But the local shopkeeper knew what it was like in the station and would kindly give me a box of fire lighters every day, I took up my newspapers, got the fire lit, got quite used to it. But Kilpatrick was also awarded on numerous occasions the best kept station because previous employees liked to put up plants and flowers etc and I carried on that tradition at Old Kilpatrick, and we were lucky enough to win some prizes.

THE BIG FREEZE

Maureen MacKeever

“ I know when I started at Kilpatrick station, I was only there a couple of years when they had the big freeze, there was no trains at all for weeks but we still had to make our way and the whole of Station Road was just a total ice rink but we still had to turn up for work. That must have been about 1984... I remember... I mean the stillness! The trees were frozen, everything was just frozen and wasn’t a breath of wind and that lasted for weeks.

KILPATRICK HILLS

A POPULAR PASTIME

John Hood

“ Heading up into the Kilpatricks was a very popular pastime, whether building gang huts in Scott’s wood, climbing the crags, fishing for tadpoles in the many bomb craters, or heading for Loch Humphrey to get birds’ eggs.

OUR SUNDAY

Irene Haworth

“ And I remember when we got bigger, about seven or eight, my Dad used to take Dorothy and I a walk every Sunday with our best coats on, and we’d go up the glen, up the Rosie Road, and down, we’d come through Filshie’s Farm, the horse, Dobbin the horse and we’d feed it, the horse on the Rosie Road, and gather rosehips from, to take, I think the school used to take the rosehips in, and we’d come down through Filshie’s Farm and my Dad would stand and talk to John Fishie, the father and the boys. It was good. That was our Sunday.

BRANDY WELL

Elma Roberston

“ Once the Napiers went away, we were allowed to go up the Kilpatrick Hills with guides from the Gavinburn farm and we were able to go up when my uncle was the gamekeeper... We used to go

up on a Sunday, not as far as Loch Humphrey but my father and my uncle, his brother, and his kids and us would go up the hills and past the Haw Craig and under the cliff where you go to Loch Humphrey. There was a troch there and my uncle used to call it the Brandy Well and we would walk to the Brandy Well and get a drink out of this troch... that was about as far as we went and even that has changed a bit from erosion because we used to get, we called them diamond stones, it was quartz, there used to be a lot of quartz and we’d always be looking for bits of quartz. My mother used to hate it because we had bits of them all over the house... We spent a lot of time in the hills. When I was into my teens and when I was at high school, a bunch of us would go up but on a Sunday the family would have family walks up there.

I remember coming down from high school and going up the Old Kilpatrick hills with a friend from high school, because we climbed down the crag under it, the Haw Craig and she froze half way down. When I look at it know I think gee wizz, we were bold right enough, no wonder she froze but we managed to get down to negotiate it, so you must've been allowed up then, after the war.



Elma's mother and father with friends out for a walk up Kilpatrick Hills (photos courtesy of Elma Roberston)

STATION ROAD

THE BOOKIE

Jim McCall

“ The police station was then latterly bought by McGarrity the bookmaker [...he] was quite a character – a respected, well-known bookie. And he latterly developed the old police station – he bought the old police station, and he made it into his own property basically and he would keep his greyhounds in the garden. Because he was an avid greyhound man; he would take them training up the hills. He would train them on the hillside and you would regularly see him out walking with his greyhounds.

THE GARAGE

Maggie Larkin

“ The pharmacy was across the road next to the Ettrick... you wouldn't believe how many houses they put in that space once they took the pharmacy away... unbelievable! and there was a garage at the bottom of Station Road with a big white house and pump to get your fuel from and that's all these flats as well now.

SHOPS AND PUBS

Lucinda McGinty

“ And then Station Road, there was a pub – Mac's Bar, or Kate's

as it was called - Kate McArthur's was her name but it was always just called just Mac's Bar. And then there was the bakery – Craig the Bakers and then there was the Co-op; Kate's was there; then there was the bakery, I think then there was the Co-op and there was a chip shop, and there was a big house sat on the corner. Old Kilpatrick was'na the way it is now, you went straight along the road and then Station Road went up there but there was a big house sat there, and I believe that was the Post Office at one time – the Post Office used to be there. And then there was all the houses up Station Road.

*Remembrance parade
(photo courtesy of Robert Fleming)*



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*Kenny
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