



Broughton Tolbooth 1582–1829

BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

New Series Number 7

March 2021

‘Farewell King Coal’ Prof Anthony Seaton, February 1st 2021

Anthony Seaton is Emeritus Professor of Environmental and Occupational Medicine at Aberdeen University and Senior Consultant at the Institute of Occupational Medicine, where he and I worked until the 1990s. His main research interests had been into the clinical and occupational effects of coal dust and other particles on the health of coalworkers, moving more recently into the environmental impact of airborne particulates on human health and in the last few years into how man-made atmospheric pollution is driving global warming and climate change.

In 2018 he produced his book ‘Farewell, King Coal: From industrial triumph to climatic disaster’. This plotted the history of how coal extraction began, its roots in Scotland and how coal’s main impact was on those who worked underground in coal mines. This eventually led to increasingly polluted towns and cities where smoke pollution was uncontrolled until the mid-1950s. The atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, which is the main combustion product of all carbon rich fuels, such as coal, oil and gas, have risen by nearly 50% during the industrial era, presenting the scientists and governments of

the world with a major problem of how to minimise its impact on the rise in global temperature.

Prof Seaton succeeded in laying this out in a series of slides of varying complexity for a general audience and painted a very convincing and currently depressing picture of our chances of dealing with it. The range of questions, which also touched on possible alternatives to fossil fuels, such as nuclear power, demonstrated that there is no easy solution to satisfy all governments and scientists as well as the general population in different parts of the world. Scotland will, of course, be hosting [COP26](#), the latest climate change conference, in Glasgow in November this year. This has been described as the last best chance of plotting the way forward for mankind, as the atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, methane and other pollutants continue to rise.

Despite the gloomy prognosis, Prof Seaton put across some difficult scientific and medical data, which seemed to leave most viewers feeling they had a better grasp of the problems we all face in the future.

Richard Love

Broughton History Society talks will continue via Zoom as per the following list

Monday 12 April, Ray Perman, "The Financial ruin of Sir Walter Scott."

Monday 3 May, Gordon Wylie, "The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh"

All talks will begin at 7.30 and last about 30 minutes. It's hoped that there will be scope for questions at the end. As before members will be asked to send Sandra Purves at spurves004@btinternet.com their email addresses in advance so that she can invite them to the session. At some point we will be able to resume a more normal programme of meetings but it is still too soon to say when that will be.

'Bright Shadows' Scottish Art in the 1920s **Dr Helen Scott 1st March 2021**

If I asked you to imagine a painting entitled 'Cecile Walton at Crianlarich' you would not, I think, come up with this one. A glorious sunlit young woman, wearing only a brightly coloured tightly fitting hat, shown in a light more reminiscent of Cannes than Crianlarich. One hopes that the temperature was too. This was one of the delightful surprises that Broughton History Society members enjoyed during the talk given on 2 March 2021 by Dr Helen Scott of City Art Centre as she told us about the exhibition which was running there, supposedly from September 2020 to May 2021, 'Bright Shadows, Scottish Art in the 1920s'. It will re-open as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Dr Scott's talk pointed out the contrasts between the horrors of the first world war and the headlong rush into the 'roaring 20s' which followed. People were eager to move on from the privations of that war, and were of course in ignorance of the further horrors which would come with the Wall Street crash, and so they were keen to travel again and to enjoy all of life's pleasures to the full. The contrast was most poignantly shown in two specific paintings – 'A Garment of War' by D Y Cameron, showing a war-ruined town, and the above-mentioned 'Cecile Walton at Crianlarich' by Eric Robertson, who was – perhaps not surprisingly – her

husband. This painting is the epitome of the hedonism that ruled at the time.

One of the roles of art may be said to be to commemorate certain periods of history, and many of the paintings that Dr Scott showed us did indeed capture the mood of this period. She also lamented the dearth of women painters in the exhibition, there being really only Cecile Walton and Katherine Cameron, whose 'Moonrise over St Giles' is one of the highlights, and Dorothy Johnstone, whose 'Rest time in the life class' also stands out. Cecile Walton's 'Romance' is a most unsettling affair, ostensibly being a painting of a mother in a clinical-looking hospital setting, holding a newborn baby as if wondering what it is, while an older child looks on, in blissful ignorance of how his/her position has just been usurped. Or maybe it's nothing to do with that at all!

Dr Scott carried us with her on this journey through a decade of real change in attitudes, and her enthusiasm for her subject is very appealing. I visited this exhibition back in September and will be delighted to return when I can, and will now look at it with new eyes and a clearer comprehension of the Zeitgeist. And a renewed wish to visit Crianlarich

Maggie McClure

Kate Cameron illustrated many books as well and the St Giles painting in the exhibition was used as one of the illustrations for 'Haunting Edinburgh' by Flora Grierson published in 1929.



MOONRISE BEHIND ST. GILES

Margaret Methven

We are sad to report the death, on 19th January 2021, of Margaret Methven, a long-time member of the Broughton History Society.

Margaret was a wonderfully cheerful person who always made us smile. Her family may have been her first love, but the BHS came close behind. She made every effort to attend evening lectures, often arriving a bit late when there was a clash with her grandmother duties to “mind the bairns after school”.

Her funeral on 12th Feb was a small affair due to Covid restrictions, but her big number of friends were there in spirit and they gladly contributed towards a sizeable donation to the Broughton History Society in her memory.

‘Puddocky’ J D Hope and old Newsletters

Members will have seen the correspondence below which Helen sent out but it is worth putting it all together. It all started with this enquiry from John Ballantyne

‘While it is in my mind could I ask if anyone knows where ‘Puddocky’ is on the Water of Leith. ‘Is it the stretch above St Mark’s Bridge opposite Warriston Cemetery, or the stretch below St Mark’s Bridge in the park?’

This provoked quite a lot of interesting reminiscences.

When I was a boy, in the early 1960s, I understood Puddocky to be the stretch of the Water of Leith south of a waterfall near to Bonnington Toll. As I recall, it was accessed off Newhaven Road.

I would say Puddocky is situated at Canonmills Bridge (right hand side going towards Inverleith Row) along to maybe as far as Waddies factory or B & Q store. As a child I used to fish on Saturday mornings and take home catch in jam jar. We would climb over wall to get to water.

I lived in Logie Green Gardens and have always know Puddocky to be the stretch of river at the bottom of Logie Green Road between the 2 bridges.

My mother & I always went to the path, ‘Puddocky’, alongside the river, going from the junction at Rodney/Dundas St to the bridge before Warriston Crematorium to get my tadpoles before they grew into puddocks = frogs. One awkward time we were caught sitting up on the wall when a big funeral went past, not really the best position for the wife of a respected Edinburgh lawyer. We could

either slide off down the water side or sit respectfully, with our heads bowed. As this was the drier option, that’s what we did. I don’t know how far down the Puddocky name went.

Puddocky is where we fished for Minnows back in the good old days. It was always under the bridge down stream, not at the Warriston end. I could bore you with stories, all manner of adventures happened at that park.

I was once told that the path between the top of St Mark’s Park and the allotments used to be called Puddocky Way and that’s why we have so many frogs at the allotment (presumably because they can read). Anyway, I reckon it is the stretch down from Powderhall to the (newish) pedestrian bridge. Shallow waters.

Here’s another perspective on Puddocky, written by our (late) local poet Robert Garioch in 1926. Robert Garioch Sutherland was brought up at 109 Bellevue Road and went to St James’s Episcopal School, 103 Broughton Street. (Later in life, as a poet he used Garioch as his surname). When he went to Edinburgh University in 1926 he wrote “Fi’baw in the Street” as a reaction against the “englishness” of the poems being written by his classmates. It is full of Broughton references, in particular

*Bi’ we stour awa ti **Puddocky**
(tha’s doon by **Logie Green**)
and wir roon by **Beaverhaw** whayr
deil a beaver’s iver seen;*

(The rest of the poem is a bit too long to include in full, but it is well worth seeking out.)

The other question submitted was *'I am very curious to learn something of the history of the J D Hope Funeral Directors' premises at 39 London Street, such as when the business began, and especially when it closed down, and when the property may have been sold. There are extremely unappealing proposals to turn all three floors into an AirBnB/Short Term Let complex.'* We found that J D Hope is listed at that address in the 1945 - 46 PO Directory, but not the 1916 - 1917 PO Directory.

Further investigation of Post Office directories online was undertaken, but the National Library of Scotland ones only go up to 1912, so weren't much help. However we found that J D Hope were not listed in the 1930 - 31 directory (39 is given as Misses Anderson), but they were in the 1940 - 1941 issue. As to when they left, they are listed in the 1973 - 4 directory, but not in 1974 - 1975. This is not the best indicator, as entries can be left in there until someone asked for them to be removed, but it gives a rough idea.

Dorothy Newlands says *I can give a bit of information on J.D. Hope, Undertakers as I lived almost next door to them. The business was there when I went to live in London Street in 1938. It was a family business. J.D. Hope had several sons, who all worked in the business and a daughter. Of the boys I think it was Arthur or Alan, joiner who made the coffins. I remember Mr Hope, a rather portly gentleman, and his wife. Both died in the 1950s. The business was then run, I think, by son Lorimer until it folded up. When I am not sure, maybe 1980s. I am almost sure the house has been empty ever since (possibly thanks to The London Street Sauna being in one of the basements).* This is not quite the information that was requested but maybe adds a personal touch.

From Alice Lauder:

My father-in-law, Alexander Lauder, died in 1974 and J.D. Hope arranged the funeral. I actually went to their premises to see him in his coffin.

In the Drummond Tennis Club (1970s) we had a member Alison Brown whose fiancé had a funeral firm in Broxburn, and we cannot

remember his name. However, my daughter used this firm for wedding cars in 1979 and she thinks that perhaps J.D. Hope amalgamated with that firm eventually. I do know that in 1974 Mr. Hope was himself in his 70s/80s so it is possible. (This Mr Hope is presumably one of the sons of the Mr Hope who died in the 1950s.)

Alice also remembers going up steps outside and the viewing room (coffin room?) was just inside the door to the right.

All this above was collated by Helen and previously sent out by email.

Intrigued by 'Puddocky' I had a look myself, Hamish Coghill's book 'Discovering the Water of Leith' says that the name comes from the former hamlet of Paddock Hall which was somewhere on its banks. I tried to find that name on old maps, but completely failed. However in the 1852 6 inch Ordnance Survey map there are stepping stones marked in the Water of Leith more or less where a big tree has recently fallen over from the cemetery side and made a natural bridge, with some buildings nearby (Warriston Road did not exist). The water is shallow here. My theory is that this might be the site of the 'ford' at Paddock Hall and the path to it on the other side could have been called the Paddock Path, or something like that, which became Puddocky. This is before the St Mark's Bridge was built, so there are no bridges between Canonmills and Bonnington Road, apart from the then railway bridge to Granton and a small footbridge beside it which looks as if it was associated with access to Warriston Cemetery, then quite new.

Meantime I received from Alice Lauder a fascinating paper index of subjects covered in the first 19 issues of the BHS Newsletter, these would go back to before 1995 and Puddocky duly gets a mention. Unfortunately I have not been able to read this article as yet but look forward to having a look at the earliest newsletters for these and other subjects.

Jim Eunson