

# CUMNOCK HISTORY GROUP



## NEWS LETTER

Spring 2023

### Meetings

Monthly Meetings are held on 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:15 pm in the Barrhill Community Centre, Bank Avenue, Cumnock KA18 1PQ.

March 16th a return visit from **Bruce Keith**, "Are we nearly there yet?" on his milestones research in a new book. This should be entertaining.

April 20th **Frank Beattie's Kilmarnock**. Frank's a retired reporter at the Kilmarnock Standard. This will be presented by **David McMeekin** due to Frank's current ill health.

May 18th **AGM**

June 15th a return visit from **Laura McMeekin** EALT on renovations at Dean Castle, with a follow up visit to the castle date to be arranged

### February's speaker



Jimmy McGhee



Photo courtesy of East Ayrshire Leisure Trust

### Book Launch Event

The Ploughing Up Our Past book launch took place in the Dumfries Arms on the 3rd February with invited guests. It was also a celebration of the end of our project. Entertainment was provided by other projects in the CCLP remit; the Cumnock Tryst with singing from Strings N Things and CAMPS. It was good to get recognition from the MSP, the Provost of East Ayrshire and Councillors.

The book is proving popular and as well as in the online shop <https://cumnockhistorygroup.org/shop/>. It can be purchased in Mary's Fabrics, Ochiltree Community Hub, Ayrshire Food Hub and Boswell's Coachhouse.

We have also donated 7 copies to East Ayrshire Libraries.



## CHG website and shop

[cumnockhistorygroup.org](http://cumnockhistorygroup.org)

## The Cumnock Family Tree

[Cumnock Connections](#)

## Management Committee

Chair: Kay McMeekin  
info@cumnockhistorygroup.org  
Membership Secretary: Ailsa McInnes  
CHGmembership@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Sadie McNair

Treasurer: Elaine Corbett

Committee Members:

Neil Given, Anne Lawrence, Alex Lennox, Robert Stevenson

Postal Address :

CHG, 8 Richmond Gardens,  
Darvel, Ayrshire KA17 0NL

## RIP Billy Anderson

Billy, who sadly died in December, was a founder member of CHG, vice chair then committee member and an enthusiastic supporter. He is sorely missed.



## Old Cumnock Kirk Session Minutes 1703-47

Yvonne Saunderson has completed the transcription of the earliest volume of Old Cumnock Kirk Session Minutes.



Pre. 1867 parish church in the Square

This gives a rare insight into the people of Cumnock at that time. Otherwise there is little or no record of most of these people. Yvonne has also done a list of the names of the people mentioned. Not all of them were wrongdoers. Many were elders or witnesses. Some family groups have been added to the Cumnock Connections tree. Yvonne had to contend with old handwriting and archaic Scots legal words, abbreviations and Latin terms. She has now got so invested in this, she is into the next volume. Thank you, Yvonne.

They can be downloaded for free from our main website [here](#).

## Jim Smith of Cairn Road

We have been given another batch of photos from Jim Smith from his cousin Helen Atkinson.

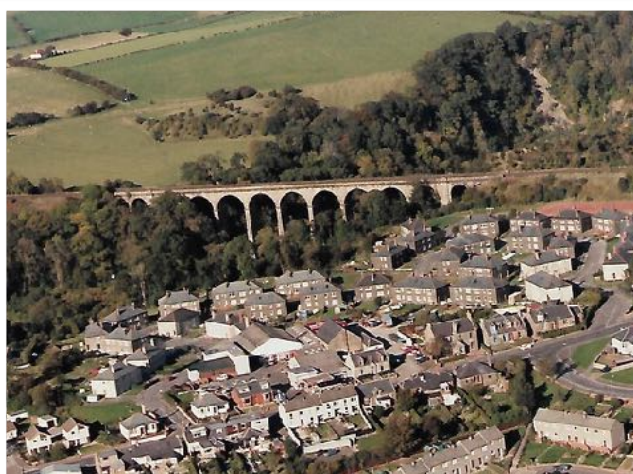
Jim worked at Strand Nursery, pictured there with Jean Gordon.





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He would hire a small aircraft to indulge his passion for photography. The latest aerial pics are from around 1990.





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## 2023 drone shots of Cumnock

Inspired by Jim's aerial photos, local man Neil Wilks took advantage of recent fine weather to send up his drone to recreate the views. Thanks Neil!







The Ploughing Up Our Past research team: L to R, Robert Stevenson, Ian McGhee, Elaine Corbett, Ailsa McInnes, Roberta McGee, Kay McMeekin

## Newsletter

Edited by Kay McMeekin

## Donate to CHG on PayPal



In Auchinleck New cemetery

## Recreating Our Past - new "then and now" photo project

We have noticed on our Facebook page and groups that people really love looking at old photos of Cumnock and reminiscing. Our town has changed vastly over the years, especially the town centre. Younger people may not even recognise where exactly the old photographs were taken from.

Our proposal is to attempt to retake the old photos from the same position and compare them possibly using an app which morphs or slides from one to the other. We would carefully select 20+ old photographs to be retaken. "Old" photographs could be as recent as 2016 before town centre redevelopments. Photos below from 2016 and 1966.

We need help getting this organised as well as people to take the photographs. Let me know if you want to be involved in any way. . [info@cumnockhistorygroup.org](mailto:info@cumnockhistorygroup.org)



## Gravestone Inscriptions - Help

During lockdown, member George McMillan photographed his way around 12 local cemeteries. He has transcribed and published 7 of those but needs help with the remaining 5. This you can do from the comfort of your own home. You would transcribe the inscriptions from photos of the headstones into a document. George will do the final putting together of the documents. The cemeteries needing done are **Sorn** Churchyard, **Dalrymple** old and new, **Muirkirk** new, **Catrine** new and **Mauchline** new. One (or two) volunteers per cemetery.

Let me know if you would like to help.  
[info@cumnockhistorygroup.org](mailto:info@cumnockhistorygroup.org)