



NEWSLETTER



Coronation Special

May 2023

Some past Royal events celebrated in Cumnock

Meetings

on the 3rd Thursday of the month in the Barrhill Centre at 7:15pm. All welcome.

AGM: 18th May 2023

15 June Laura McMeekin on Dean Castle

The group is on holiday during July and August

Annual Membership

Is £10 from April to March

Management Committee

Chair: Kay McMeekin
info@cumnockhistorygroup.org

Vice Chair: Sadie McNair

Treasurer: Elaine Corbett

Membership Secretary:

Ailsa McInnes

Neil Given

Anne Lawrence

Alex Lennox

Robert Stevenson

More committee members needed

1902 Coronation Of King Edward VII & Queen Alexandra

Reported in the Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald, accessed via the British Newspaper Archive.

Friday 15 August 1902

The Cumnock festivities were attended with great enthusiasm. They commenced with a dance in the field near the Dumfries Arms Hotel on Friday night. A platform had been erected in a sheltered spot behind the Town Hall, and as there was a huge gathering it was fully occupied whenever a dance had been called. It had a most attractive appearance. Around it were about a dozen poles, nicely draped and carried on the top of those was a circle of cloth, while tiny lamps hung from a line a little lower. The colours were red, white, and blue, and the effect was very fine. The weather caused some anxiety. There had been ominous clouds during the day, and when evening came they had not passed. Happily, however, there was no rain, excepting an almost imperceptible shower about midnight and the dance was carried to a successful termination shortly after 1 am. The music was supplied by Mr H. B. McCulley's String Band. Mr David White erected the platform, and the poles were put up by men employed on the Dumfries House and Logan estates. The proceedings were under the control of Dr M'Queen and a committee and were managed so well that there was an entire absence of rowdyism. The dancers were in excellent spirits, and seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly. There were many spectators. Viewed from a distance the place, well lighted as it was, had a very lively and attractive appearance. On Saturday the people were early astir. Day dawned



Recreating Our Past

Our new project involves retaking old photographs from the same standpoint for comparison, then and now.



Facebook

We have a Page several active FB groups -

[Cumnock Family History](#)

[Photos of Cumnock Today](#)

[CHG Recreating Our Past](#)

[Old Cumnock](#)

[Old Cumnock Chitchat](#)

[Cumnock School Photos](#)

All run by Garry Savage or Kay McMeekin

Our big family tree

[Cumnock Connections](#)

This Newsletter

Research and edited by Kay McMeekin

on a town resplendent with colour. There was an abundance of evidence that the event was to be celebrated with whole-hearted zeal. Flags fluttered at all points. Glaisnock Street was a mass of red, white, and blue. At the Town Hall were two arches, one at each entrance, both erected by [John M'Leod](#) joiner. They were bathed in colour and looked splendid. The front of the Hall itself was tastefully decked. Across the way the Pottery Row consisting of white houses, stood out bravely against a streak of evergreens. The Dumfries Arms Hotel was conspicuous and four firs had been set in the footway. Farther down was [Arch. Brakenridge](#)'s house, beautifully dressed. The stream of flags branched off to the Bank Scotland, Ayr Road, the Square thence to the Townhead, Ayr Road, and Barrhill. The Black Bull and Royal Hotels were prettily decorated, and the photographic studios were specially noteworthy, as well as the Public School and the Lady Bute Hospital. Mr John M'Kinnon had a handsome arch.

In Ayr Rd. [Matthew Smith](#) had a no less handsome one in Glaisnock Street, and one at Riverside did Mr [H. Morrison](#) great credit.



Possibly showing the arch of Matthew Smith

A breakfast to the poor from [Mr James Gray](#) Chairman of the Parish Council took place in the Town Hall on Saturday at 9 o'clock. There were more than 60 guests. Mr Gray himself occupied the chair, and he offered some suitable remarks concerning the auspicious occasion, referred to the disappointment caused by the postponement of the Coronation in June and expressed good wishes towards the

King. The Rev [D Keogh](#) spoke a few appropriate words expressive of the gratitude of the recipients of the chairman's liberality, and proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Gray. He was seconded by Mr Wm. Hill. There was a hearty response.

Miss [Lily Stoddart](#) and Mr [Robert Crawford](#) sang, and selections of Scotch music were played by Miss [Mary Ballantine](#), pianist. Thus the time passed pleasantly.



Lily Stoddart

The breakfast consisted of salmon, ham and eggs, plenty of tea and bread, and was very much appreciated.

At the close each guest received a gift of 5 shillings.

Mr Gray took a practical interest in the arrangements for the treat and Mr [David Smith](#), inspector, ably did the work entrusted to him.

The registered poor to the number of about 50 (?) got 5s each from the public fund while nearly 80 other needful persons received 8s each from the same fund. An outstanding part of the programme was the Procession.

The muster took place in front of the school about 2 o'clock, Col Sgt Instructor Paris acted as marshal. In the forenoon there had been a leaden

sky but now the sun shone brightly. The Birnieknowe Brass Band led the way followed by a long line of children, many of whom carried flags and floral devices. Two pipers were present. The rest of the procession comprised representatives of public bodies, Free Masons, a carriage containing men who had survived the coronation of two sovereigns, cyclists in fancy dress and carters.

The aged occupants of the carriage when it reached the end of its journey were

:- Messrs [Matthew Riggans](#), [Andrew Hodge](#), [James Dunsmore](#), [Matthew Cook](#), [William Baird](#), James M'Crae, [James M'Arthur](#), [John Kay](#), [David Richmond](#), [James Murdoch](#), [John Hessett](#), Patrick Whiting, [John Munn](#), Robert Wilson, Jas. Nisbet, [James Gilfillan](#), [Matthew Smith](#) and [James M'Kinnon](#).

Regret was expressed that the trade and other friendly societies were not represented. Mr [A Bryce](#) had a lorry in which was a donkey with a boy on its back and Mr [James Garry](#) had a similar vehicle crowded with lads. The comical costumes of the knights of the wheel were the cause of great merriment. One cyclist was attired as Charlie's Aunt. There were various guesses at his identity. His face was hidden by a mask, he had luxuriant tresses, and altogether his disguise was effectual with most people. Mr [John Good](#) carrying a banner taken from the field of Waterloo represented General Galbraith of the time of the great battle. Mr [James Parker](#) impersonated Robinson Crusoe; one pedaller was got up as a donkey, one as a monkey another as a frog, one came out strongly in the stars and stripes and yet another as a gentleman of colour. Mounted on a tiny cycle, Master James Parker was not the least of the attractions. After having paraded the principal streets, the processionists went to the Dumfries Arms fields. The cyclists mounted the platform and paraded round it. There they were the centre of an admiring crowd. Charlie's Aunt walk with a stately stride, and appeared to catch the eye of the judges, [Provost Andrew](#), ex-[Provost](#)

Richmond and Messrs Thomas Hunter and James Gray. The prize-winners were: Best turn out 1 John Good 2 Joseph Smith, Skares 3 James Parker. Most comical turn out: 1 Peter Dunlop 2 James MacKervail 3 Andrew Stillie. The children that obtained prizes for floral devices were 1 Elsie McKinnon 2 Jeanie Parker 3 Bessie Brownlee 4 Cunningham Scott 5 Agnes Anderson equal Maggie Murphy, Sarah Ray, Mary Welsh, Marion Craig, Jeanie Bingham. 1 Robert Smith 2 Thomas Smith 3 John M'Kinnon 4 Adam Rettie Equal A M'Gill and Andrew M'Gregor. The little ones got upon the platform and they sang patriotic songs including of course The National Anthem.

Provost Andrew in a short speech remarked on the postponement of the Coronation in June, and expressed his gladness that the King had made such a wonderful recovery. He hoped that his Majesty might have a long and prosperous reign. Thereafter the children had tea. Subsequently a dance took place which was even more largely attended than the previous night. The music on this occasion was supplied by the Birnieknowe Brass Band. Dancing continued until about 8 o'clock.

The Burgh was beautifully illuminated and the streets were soon crowded once more. The

were brilliantly illuminated. Truly the occasion was a memorable one in Cumnock.



THE LATE MR. RALPH BRAKENRIDGE

Among other notable displays were those of Dr Kerr, Mr James Gray, The Clydesdale Bank, the Baird Institute, Mr James M'Grady, Mr D. B. Cree, Mr W M'Geachin, The Black Bull and Royal Hotels, Mr Brakenridge, Mr Todd, Baillie Cree, Mr A. F. Borland, Mr Wm. Hill, and ex Provost Richmond. The arches were attended to by Messrs Hugh Morrison, Matthew Smith, J O'Neill, and John M'Kinnon. Fireworks were sent aloft from Shankston Bing. There were some brilliant devices, and the exhibition was much enjoyed. From the unblinded windows of many windows came floods of light which went to make up an effective scene. A heavy fall of rain about 11 o'clock compelled the people to make for home.



The Town Hall

exterior of the Town Hall had a magnificent appearance the letters E R being formed by jets, which made a pretty spectacle. There was a fine display at the gas manager's house which had a charming aspect. The chief arches in the town



The Baird Institute

1863 Wedding of Edward Prince of Wales & Alexandra

Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald 14th March 1863



Like all other places, Cumnock has been seized with the universal fever of rejoicing, which seems to have communicated itself, like electric fire, to every part of the United Kingdom. By unanimous

consent it was decreed a universal holiday, and consequently every shop was shut, and every place of business closed up. As you enter the town by the road leading from Dumfries—the Pottery Row, where the works and place of business of our enterprising townsman, James Nichol, potter and china merchant, is carried out, and where his workmen reside—it seems as if every house was dressed in its holiday attire, and as if every hearth was sending forth a bride or bridegroom to the altar, instead of rejoicing at the distant wedding of our future King and Queen. The Dumfries Arms Hotel, possessed by Mr Murray is decorated in front with fine tall spreading firs, transplanted from the Dumfries estates, and clothed in all their native verdure and luxuriance, whilst the house and balconies are covered with flowers and evergreens, and amidst those fragrant pyramids, stands embossed two large A's, skillfully woven with mossflowers, evergreens, and honeysuckle, and as evening shed her folds over the enraptured and joyous town it beheld every branch and twig of those massy firs sparkling and streaming in the light shed from 100 lamps of every hue and shade of colour, and the A's lighted up with gas, gleaming and glittering as if a thousand diamond jets were sending forth a thousand beams of flame, making the setters appear as if they were swimming in light and beauty. Passing along Glaisnock Street, a

fine bower spans it from the window of Mr James Paterson, merchant, to that of Mr White, banker; and another from Mr Torrance, merchant, to Mr Lawson, grocer. In the Square a large bonfire is burning ; and you have to pass out under another splendid bower into Lugar Street, where you discover the premises of Mr James Crawford, flesher, surmounted and decorated with knots of evergreens and flowers; and from the highest pinnacle of his temple is streaming an old tattered banner of the Covenant. At half-past twelve the Cumnock volunteers mustered at the Dumfries Arms, under the command of Lieut. Ettershanks and Ensign White, and Dr Lawrence, our eminent townsman, staff-surgeon, also clad in armour of the military uniform assumed by the company. The Lugar band was in attendance, and after having toasted the Prince and Princess, with banners waving having emblazoned I believe thereon, Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori, marched into the town and through the square, firing a joyous (not staggering) salute as they passed. As the volunteers turned out, they are an excellent body of men, and not more loyal subjects in the kingdom, At night there was a splendid display of fireworks in the square. The surrounding villages are equally loyal, and their exhibition of it is even excelling our own. At Corsencon, New Cumnock, and Cairntable, Muirkirk, two large bonfires are blazing, throwing their flaming beams of rejoicing light over the haughs of Clyde, the vales of Nith, the glens of Galloway, the steeps of Annan and the dales of Renfrew, greeting the lights of Carrick on the one hand, and the fires of Pentland on the other, testifying and assuring each other that every strath and valley over which these beacon lights shed their glare, are peopled with fond and loving hearts, whose bosoms are beating high with hope and gratitude at the promises of this auspicious wedding day. The townspeople met in the evening in Mr Murray's hall, and offered up a hearty welcome to the youthful and Royal pair.

1911 Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary

The Scotsman - Saturday 24 June 1911



A sum of about £50 was distributed amongst 150 of the poor of the town. A cake and wine banquet was held and was attended by representatives of the various public bodies. On the conclusion of the banquet, during which the health of the King and Queen was pledged, the company proceeded in procession to the public for all : the school children of the parish, Alexander Gemmell, banker in Bradford, a native of the town, provided Coronation badges or medals for all the school children of the parish, some twelve hundred in number. A procession was formed of the band of the 5th R.S.F, the Town Council, Parish Public Council, School Board, the children of Cumnock Public School, Skares School, and St. John R.C school, 5th R.S.F. Territorials, Veteran Reserves, Boy Scouts, Orangemen and Free Gardeners, and Shepherds Friendly

Societies. The procession marched to a field at Stockiehill, on the Dumfries estate of the Marquis of Bute, where the afternoon was spent as pleasantly as adverse weather conditions permitted. The children were liberally entertained.



Who still has one of these medals?

Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897

Friday 25 June 1897
Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald

THE Diamond Jubilee celebrations have come and gone, and all that now remains of them is a memory—but it is a very pleasant one. By nine o'clock every atmospheric condition gave indication of a "splendid day," and general happiness reigned supreme. About this time thoroughfares began to wear a very animated aspect. Gaily dressed children hurried in the direction of the school as if eager to get started with the day's proceedings. Grown-up people moved about and discussed the weather, but the trend of all their footsteps was to the rallying ground in Barrhill Road. From half-past until after ten the procession committee had a busy time of it in getting the different bodies into position, but so amiable and agreeable did these good people prove to be that the work of arrangement was neither arduous nor unpleasant. As was mentioned in our last week's page the children assembled in the playground where the teachers speedily arranged them according to their standards. The other processionists formed upon Barrhill Road. The Band of the 2nd V.B. Royal Scots Fusiliers was forward in good time, and as they drew up into position, playing a spirited Scottish march tune, the stirring music quite vivified the crowd. Prompt to time the word "march" was given, and the lengthy procession began to move. It was, of course, headed by the band, and coming immediately behind them were the local volunteers. They turned out in their full strength, and Captain Craig, who was in command, has to be heartily congratulated upon the smart and soldier-like appearance which his men presented. Immediately behind them came the late Captain Cunningham's (of Logan) "stage carriage" now the property of Councillor Kirkpatrick. This carriage, which, after the children, was the most unique feature of the procession, was specially built for Capt. Cunningham, and used for the first time at the actual coronation of her Majesty in 1837. On

Tuesday it presented a most notable appearance as it was drawn through the streets by four spirited greys—greys were also the old Captain's favourites.

Inside the coach were Provost Richmond and Bailie Andrew, and on "the box" were seated Councillors Martin and McCaughie. Mounted behind were the Burgh Officers, Mr David Richmond, the oldest employee in the service of the burgh, and Mr



James Richmond

Andrew Harvey. The efforts of "Andrew" to extract music from a post horn were patiently and uncomplainingly suffered because of the occasion. Behind the coach walked the other members of the Commission, and following the came the members of the Parish Council and School Board, with the Town Clerk (Mr Arch. Brakenridge) and the Burgh Treasurer (Mr David Smith.) The next in order were the school children of the Public School, and an altogether splendid appearance did the little ones make. Beginning with the Infant Department, the scholars of the different standards, from I. up to ex-VI., followed in their due order. Each standard was in charge of its own teachers, but so orderly and admirably did the pupils march that they needed little or no correction or angry words from their superiors. They were all decorated with the commemorative medal, and nearly every boy or girl carried a flag or a floral device, while one lad carried an excellent picture of the Queen, drawn by a local artist. The children were very enthusiastic, and as they moved along they made first the streets and latterly the welkin ring and ring again with the united force of their young and healthy lungs. After the children of the Public School came those of St John's and they had a banner all to themselves. Mr W. A. Shand had a place to himself, and he carried an original design of great beauty. Stalwart Piper Duncan came next, and

immediately behind him came the Boys' Brigade. Following the boys came members of Court Glaisnock, no. 234, with banner; the local tent of Rechabites, who carried a " teetotal " flag; Court Glaisnock Order of Foresters, who were led by Mr James Park, dressed as " Robin Hood" and mounted on a spirited steed; a couple of joiners from Mr A. C. Riddell's, who were busy at the Victoria Fountain ceremony bench on top of a lorry, which was lavishly decorated with shavings. Agriculture was represented by a handsome turnout from Mr James Bain, Horsecleugh. Mr Bryce, carting contractor, kindly sent some of his horses and lorries, all of which were handsomely decorated. A number of horsemen brought up the rear.

On arriving at the field, the children were at once led into the spacious enclosure, where they were formed into one great mass. Conducted by Mr H. B. McCulley, and accompanied by the band, they sang the National Anthem, and then some Scottish and English songs. By this time it was noon, and the volunteers were drawn up and fired a feu de joie, while the band, which was formed in behind, played "God Save the Queen".

The feeding of the children was next proceeded with. There were many willing hands ready to assist, and in a marvellously short time the little ones had had an abundant and substantial supply of buns and milk. Then the enclosure was cleared and the sports inaugurated. These were conducted with considerable expedition, as will be readily understood when it is mentioned that over 40 events were gone through in less than three hours. During the progress of the sports the grown-up people indulged in a variety of other games when not watching the different events. Two dance programmes were gone through, and seemed to be as much enjoyed as they were largely taken part in. Other games for the little ones were organised. There was any amount of swinging and ball-playing. Between 4:00 and 5:00 o'clock the children had their afternoon repast and shortly after that the procession for the homeward journey was formed. The town was reached about 7:00 o'clock - everybody tired, but happy.

The jubilee memorial fountain



A large gathering of people assembled in the square to witness the ceremony of turning on the water, which was performed by Mrs Richmond (wife of the Provost of Cumnock), who was presented with a silver cup a memento of the occasion. The cup was filled with water, of which Mrs Richmond drank a little, and then declared the fountain open for the use of the public. The fountain bears the following inscriptions: "Victoria, Diamond Jubilee, 1837-1897" and on the opposite side, "Erected by Public Subscription." The lower part is of grey granite, with drinking cups. An ornamental column of red granite in the centre supports an incandescent lamp, which will burn all night.

The Queen - Saturday 22 January 1898

Coronation of George VI in 1937

The Scotsman - Thursday 13 May 1937

The town was elaborately decorated. A service was held in the Old Church in the forenoon. A procession, including school children and adults, in fancy costumes was watched by large crowds in the main streets of the town, as it made its way to Woodroad Park where a dozen balloons bearing a Coronation message from Cumnock, were released. The National Anthem was sung. The crowd then joined in community singing. A fun fair for the children was held, and they also attended a cinema performance. The children also received gifts. A concert was given at the swimming pool and there was open-air dancing. In the evening, there was another concert and a fireworks display, and a bonfire was also lit. There was midnight bathing in the specially heated water of the swimming pool. Elderly people received a gift of half a crown.