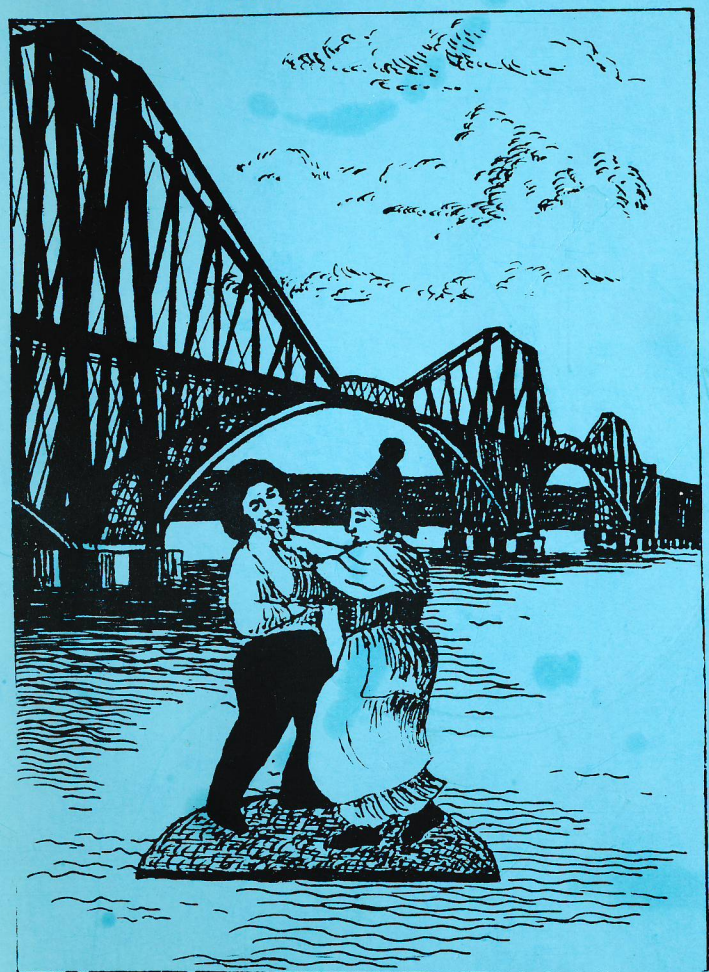
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REMINISCENCES OF NORTH QUEENSFERRY 1890 - 1990



A MATTER OF HERITAGE

Produced by North Queensferry Heritage Trust with the aid of Dunfermline District Council

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A view of North Queensferry village
before the Forth Rail Bridge

" Reminiscing 100 years 1890 - 1990 "

This booklet has been compiled from the reminiscences of the indigenous villagers during this centennial year of the completion of the great Forth Rail Bridge. It is not intended to be historically accurate but I hope that the reader will find it interesting and amusing. I thank everyone who kindly contributed their nostalgic trip down 'memory lane', which will now have a place in the heritage of this village you all love.

Margaret J. Tate
Secretary for
North Queensferry
Heritage Trust



Gala Procession arrives at Carlingnose Park 1930's



Pipe band leads the Gala Procession 1930's

" Making Our Own Entertainment "

Peter Roberts of Main Street is recognised as the oldest indigenous villager of North Queensferry today. Born in 1903, Peter can still recall many happy memories of life in the " Ferry."

" When I was a young man of about twenty or so, dancing was all the rage", he says, "but money was scarce and hired bands were expensive, so my friends and I decided to form our own band. There were quite a few of us who were musical and could play instruments such as the piano, fiddle or accordian. We called ourselves the "Jolly Beggars" and practised in my mother's front room. I don't know how she could stand the noise but she never complained. Brunton's Hall was owned by the quarry and I worked in the quarry blacksmith shop which was just across the road from the hall in Forthside Terrace. Mr Ashworth was the quarry manager at the time and he was not always easy to speak to. However I plucked up the nerve to ask him for the use of the hall to run weekly dances and, to my surprise, he ageed right away. Well, after the very first dance we held, you should have heard the clapping; everyone enjoyed it so much that we held them every Friday and Saturday after that."

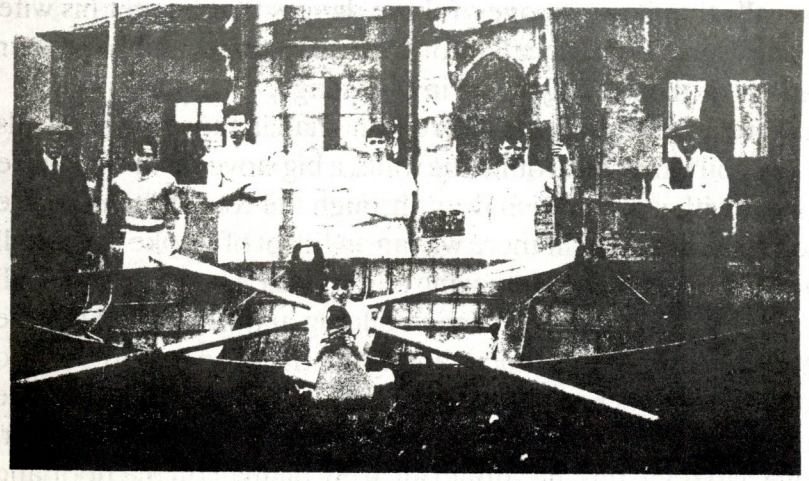
Peter recalls that it was at one of these dances that he met his wife Flora. They have been married for over sixty years, and have four generations of their family living in the village.

"There were no electric lights in Brunton's hall in those days" recalls Peter, "only oil lamps all around the walls, a big stove sat in the centre of the floor with a pipe which went through the roof. When the fire and the lamps were first lit there was an awful lot of smoke in the hall but it never stopped people enjoying themselves. The floor of the hall was wooden just like the rest of the building and we wanted it to be good and slippery for the dances but again, the proper stuff was too dear for our poor pockets, so one of the army boys from Carlingnose Barracks suggested that we should scrape candle wax onto the floor. When we had done this, he spread an army blanket on the floor and sat down on it. After about an hour of pulling him all around the floor

on this blanket we had the slippiest floor for dancing as anywhere."

"The quarrymen had a very good boat team in the old days" Peter also recalls, "They had teams of rowing 'Pairs', 'Fours' and 'Eights' and won quite a lot of trophies which were kept in their big boat shed at Pierhead but I have no idea where they are now."
Peter's cousin Willie Penny, recalls that one of the boats was called "Annie MacGregor" after the wife of one of the crew, "but she never won anything, because she had a bulge on her bottom," declared Willie, (I think he was talking about the boat)

Life might have been hard in Victorian North Queensferry but the villagers enjoyed their Leisure time as well.
There were Gala days before the war years with all age groups taking part in the 'fancy dress' parade.
The pipe band assembled (as it still does) at the bottom of the Brae and would make its way up the hill to Carlingnose Park (which used to be the football pitch).
Although the Gala days of today may be more sophisticated, I am assured by the older residents that they were just as much fun then.
The church also played a central role in village life. Mary Burns



North Queensferry rowing fours

remembers going regularly to Sunday School, because she enjoyed the Christmas parties and the summer picnics when they would all climb on board Bald's cart which was pulled by horse, all the way to Saline. "We had our tin mugs tied round our necks with string, and our names on a label pinned to our dress or coat. It was all very exciting for us then," said Mary "and because children did not have everything like todays youngsters, we looked forward to an event such as the picnic. I can remember when as a wee girl I did not have a real dolly , but a shiny oblong stone from the beach wrapped in an old jersey and I played with that stone as if it was a real dolly.
When it was near Christmas, the shops in the village would dress their windows with tinsel and sweets and toys would also be laid out. We children would stand outside the windows looking at all these lovely things and play a guessing game. That was as good as a present to us. Of course Christmas was not celebrated then as it is now in Scotland; everyone still worked on Christmas day except if it was on a Sunday. Some people call them the bad old days but I don't, because I had a happy childhood and although we were quite poor, we had a lot of fun.

There used to be quite a few shops in the village at one time," Mary recalls, "There were three general grocer shops, the Post Office, paper shop and two sweetie shops. Mrs Turner had one of the sweetie shops and the toffees were unwrapped loose in a box in the window. She also kept a large fluffy cat which sat on top of the toffees. When she asked us, "what kind of toffees do you want?" we would say "the ones that the cat is lying on!" Mary laughs at this and says "Talk about hygene! but it never seemed to do us any harm because I'm still here to tell the tale."

"There used to be a chip shop, where 'Torbeck' is" Mary also recalls, "The Cunningham family lived there and also had a chip cart that they pulled round the village. It had a coal stove in it with a chimney sticking out the roof, and we kids would jump up onto the side of the

cart because it was lovely and warm inside and the smell was so mouthwatering."
Some years after the Cunningham family gave up the chip business, and another shop opened in Battery Road. This was run by Don Sherriff and his wife Dora until sometime in the sixties when the building was pulled down due to being condemned by the council.

The following is a rhyme song game played by Mary Burns and her friends :

"We Are The Rovers, We Are The Gallant Soldiers"

(Boys)
Have you any bread and wine,
We are the rovers,
Have you any bread and wine,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Girls)
Yes we have some bread and wine,
We are the rovers,
Yes we have some bread and wine,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Boys)
Then give to us some bread and wine,
We are the rovers,
Give to us some bread and wine ,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Girls)
We will not give you bread and wine,
We are the rovers,
We will not give you bread and wine,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Boys)
We will send for the blue coat men,
We are the rovers,
We will send for the blue coat men,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Girls)
We will send for the red coat men,
We are the rovers,
We will send for the red coat men,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Boys)
What care we for the red coat men,
We are the rovers,
What care we for the red coat men,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(Both)
Then buckle up your sleeves and begin to fight,
We are the rovers,
Then buckle up your sleeves and begin to fight,
We are the gallant soldiers.

(All join in a mock battle, tugging each other.)

" Working for a Living "

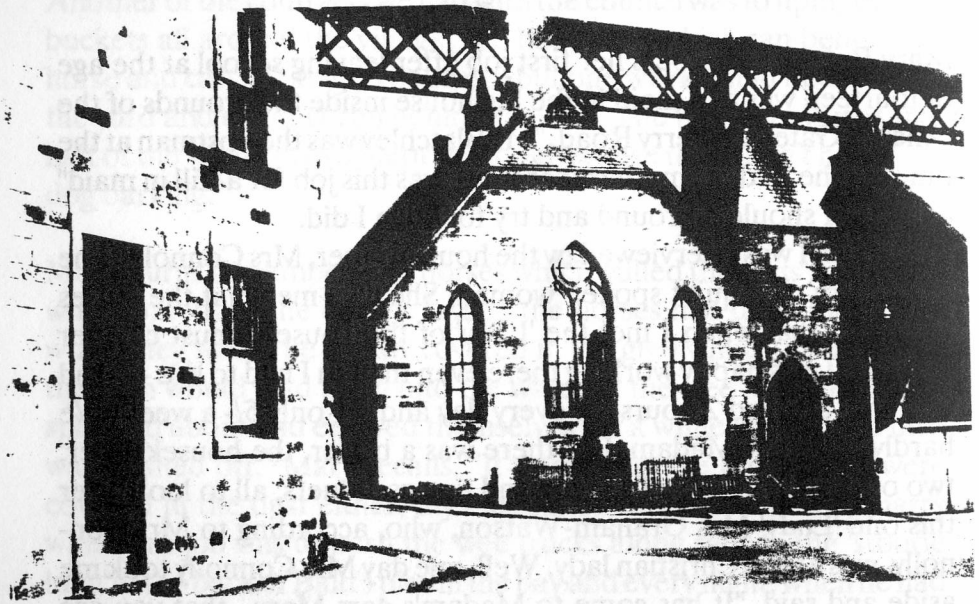
Jim Bald of 'Dalquhamie Cottage', is soon to retire from the haulage business which his family began last century. Jim's grandfather had been Manager of the Battery quarry in those days until an accidental explosion lost him his hand. " My grandfather was given £50 and the piece of land for 'Dalquhamie' as compensation. About that time my Uncle Willie and my father were doing a number of contract jobs for the council. They would take cart loads of whinstone from the quarry to places like Saline and Steelend where the council were working on the roads. After delivering the whinstone they would call at Townhill brickworks and bring back a load of bricks to build the cottage.
Another of the contracts we had with the council was to uplift the ash buckets all around the village. We had a dog which ran behind the horse and cart barking its head off, but one week it had been hurt in the yard and couldn't run behind the cart. The funny thing was that half of the villagers overslept that day because they hadn't heard the dog barking."

Mary Burns remembers the horses which pulled the carts laden with whinstone from the quarry. "After the horses had done their day's work, they would be thickly covered in the grey whinstone dust and the men would lead them into the water at the wee bay where they splashed about and enjoyed themselves for a while until all the dust was washed off." Mary recalls, "It wasn't just the horses that were covered in the dust either, my elder brother worked in the quarry where his job was to push the wee trucks along rails to the 'stoorie bing' at the back of Bald's pier in the bay and every night, when he had finished work, he looked just like a ghost because he was grey from head to foot. We didn't have bathrooms in the houses at 'bug row', as Forthside Terrace was called in those days, just an old zinc bath in front of the kitchen fire."
Peter Roberts recalls his early working days began in the quarry blacksmith's shop beside his father. "My father was a blacksmith to

trade and he came to work in Battery quarry where they made the tools for the riveters working on the railway bridge. My grandfather on my mother's side was a stonemason in the quarry at that time, so I have close connections with the bridge construction." He goes on to tell of his own connections with the railway bridge, "After I left the quarry smithy I went to work for the telephone company and my first job as a linesman was to lay the cables across the bridge for the signal boxes at either end. However the cables snapped because they had not allowed for the expansion of the bridge in hot weather and I was sent out to do it all over again."
After that he was a deckhand on the ferryboats for some years, before they ended in 1964.

Mary Burns remembers her first job after leaving school at the age of fourteen was as a maid in the big house inside the grounds of the 'Anchor Gates' on Ferry Road. "Mr Blatchley was the postman at the time and he told my mother that there was this job for a "fill in maid" and that I should go round and try for it, so I did.
First of all, I was interviewed by the housekeeper, Mrs Connolly. She was a very nice quiet spoken woman. She told me what the duties were and that when I met the 'Lady' of the house, I must call her Madam. I was happy working there even though I had to live -in and was only allowed 2 hours off every day and for only 5/- a week. We hardly ever saw Madam. But there was a butler, the housekeeper, two other maids, as well as me, and two gardeners, all to look after this one 'Lady' Mrs Graham-Watson, who, according to Mrs Connolly, was a very Christian lady. Well, one day Mrs Connolly took me aside and said, "It has come to Madam's ears Mary, that you are responsible for trampling on the flowers in the garden and she will be sending for you." I didn't know what she was talking about," says Mary, "I hadn't trampled on any flowers. Anyway, next day, Mrs Connolly ushered me in front of Mrs Graham-Watson. She said to me, "Mary, I am very upset with you for trampling on the flowers," "But I didn't do it " Mary said, "Now Mary we will say a little prayer

and ask God to forgive you" said Mrs Graham-Watson" and she put a little prayer book into my hand. After she had said the prayer, asking for God's forgiveness, she sacked me!" said Mary "Yes that very Christian 'Lady', gave me the sack, because I was supposed to have trampled on the flowers in her garden, would you believe." Mary soon found other employment, but she has never forgotten that incident with a "Very Christian Lady" and laughs, heartily when she tells the story.



The old Parish Church
North Queensferry
(Bell View) building on the left

" Village Characters "

Every village has it's well remembered characters and North Queensferry is no exception. Mr Donaldson who was the grandfather of the Marwood sisters, is remembered by Peter Roberts because he was the village lamplighter. "There were only oil lamps in those days," recalls Peter. "Old Donaldson as we called him had a long silvery beard which came way down to his middle. Every day he had to check the oil lamps all round the village, trimming the wicks, cleaning the globes and filling them with paraffin oil. He sometimes let us boys help him and then he would give us one penny. Well, there was always a rush to help him when we saw him, but if you were not careful he would say, "No, you broke a globe last time, so you are not helping again." Peter says "I used to make sure that I was careful, because I wanted the penny for sweets, and the minute I got it I was off to Mrs Chalmers wee shop to spend it."



The Marwood sisters remember an old lady who was called 'The Nut Brown Maiden.' " Her skin was as brown as a kipper," remembers Margaret, " and she liked her pint pot of ale."

Mary Burns remembers Tommy Turner, who rode about the village on a tricycle. He had a peg leg and he stuck it in a syrup tin so that he could pedal. "We used to shout out to him and he would race after us, his peg leg going up and down in the syrup tin!" laughs Mary.

Another well remembered character was Rajah Mohammet who was Pierman for the 'Queensferry Passage' at the north side for many years. He was also an accomplished violin player. The children of the village especially loved when he flew his home made kites at Queen Margaret's playing fields and he usually helped them to make their own kites to fly in the Gala competition. Rajah's daughter, Maggie, was a post lady for the village for 28 years and his grand daughter May has been the Brownie leader in the village for 28 years, which shows dedication.



" A Busy Wee Place "

Many of the old residents claim that the village used to be quite industrious in the old days. There was the quarry workings with the boats coming in, at the wee quarry bay, to Balds pier. When the bigger ships came up river they had to take on board a 'pilot' and the pilot boat house was situated at the far end of Battery Road, behind where the north cantilever of the bridge stands. Although the building is no longer there, the slipway where the pilot boat operated from is still in use by local boat owners to this day. Tom Muir's father and older brother, Hugh, were both pilot boat men for many years before Hugh became skipper on the ferryboats. This summer a television crew from Pebble Mill came to the village to do a programme about the Centenary of the bridge. Tom Muir got chatting to the chap who was doing the interviews and it turned out that many years ago his grandfather had been a 'pilot man' and had stayed at the pilot boat cottage with his wife and triplet daughters. Tom remembered the occasion as he had been there at the time with his own father. As Tom remarked " It's a small world indeed!" At the other end of the village, there was the freight railway which brought goods to be shipped by ferryboat to the Lothians and there was also a ship breakers yard.

Bald's business grew and expanded from horse and cart to a fleet of lorries. Jim remembers when he bought his first loory, which cost him £1200, his Uncle Willie said, "Man, you're daft, wasting money on that. You will never make it pay." Well Jim proved him wrong because it wasn't long before he had several more and they were all fully used.

With all the hustle and bustle of the industrious side of the village, it meant quite a lucrative economy for the tradesmen of the village shops. There was 'Peggy's' the dairy on the corner of Post Office Lane and 'Stocks' the grocer, (where the Smugglers Cafe is now). Miss Davison had a sweet shop (where the Post Office is now). Mrs Reid

The First Air Raid in 1939

Wednesday marked the eighteenth anniversary of the first air raid of the Second World War. A man who was very close to this first real incident of the War which took place over the Firth of Forth was Mr Alfred Blatchley, then employed as a postman at North Queensferry.

In a letter sent to the *Press* from Gosford, New South Wales, Australia, where he is now resident, Mr Blatchley recalls the excitement of that day—16th October 1939. The episode of the first air raid was re-enacted and made into a documentary film entitled, "Squadron 992." Mr Blatchley, the late Mrs Rose Harrison, and children of North Queensferry, along with personnel of the R.A.F. Balloon Squadron stationed at North and South Queensferry, took part in the film.

In his letter, which he heads "The Day the Mail Failed to be Dispatched," Mr Blatchley writes:—

"It was a bright sunny afternoon in October. The postman had just come into the village post office with the afternoon collection, and the postmaster was preparing the mail for dispatch on the 2.40 p.m. train to Dunfermline. H.M.S. Southampton lay at anchor, close on the east side of the Forth Bridge. H.M.S. Mohawk entered the boom defence gate and steamed up the Firth toward Rosyth Naval Dockyard.

"It was as peaceful a scene as one could wish for, as the year was 1939 and up to that month there had been little in the nature of warlike activities. It was what was known as the "phoney" war period. Above, all was a beautiful blue sky with hardly a cloud to be seen; certainly no signs of enemy aircraft.

"NEAR MISS"

"Suddenly, out of the blue sky came the swish, whistle, and crash of exploding bombs—a near miss on the warship close to the Bridge with some damage to the ship.

"Says 'Postie'—ex-Royal Artillery—who was also an air raid warden, to Postmaster, ex-C.P.O., Royal Navy, 'Sounds like a dog fight up above, Jimmy.' Both realised at once it was an air raid. Jimmy locked and bolted the post office, the mail lay neglected on the floor, and the warden-cum-postman nipped to the wardens' post and phoned the report centre, 'Ready for action.' Anti-aircraft guns blazed away, fighters took off from adjacent airfields, and the hunt was on.

"Streaking for home, the Nazi bombers swooped low and had a departing shot at H.M.S. Mohawk with their machine guns, injuring some of her personnel on deck. But they did not get back, being brought down over the Pentland Hills.

"So ended the first daylight air raid on 16th October 1939, the prelude to Hitler's attempt to conquer the world and which brought death and destruction to millions, changed the face of many nations, and did not cease until 1945 after the first atomic bomb had destroyed the Japanese town of Hiroshima.

"Australia was spared the brutal destruction and loss of life during that period, but is the scene of the testing of more powerful bombs and missiles at Woomera rocket range and Maralinga at present day. Why? What are we preparing for? Will the first bomb 'out of the blue' be an atomic one and a near miss on another bridge that Sydney is so proud of?

"Cannot we get the 'peace in our time' that Neville Chamberlain promised?"

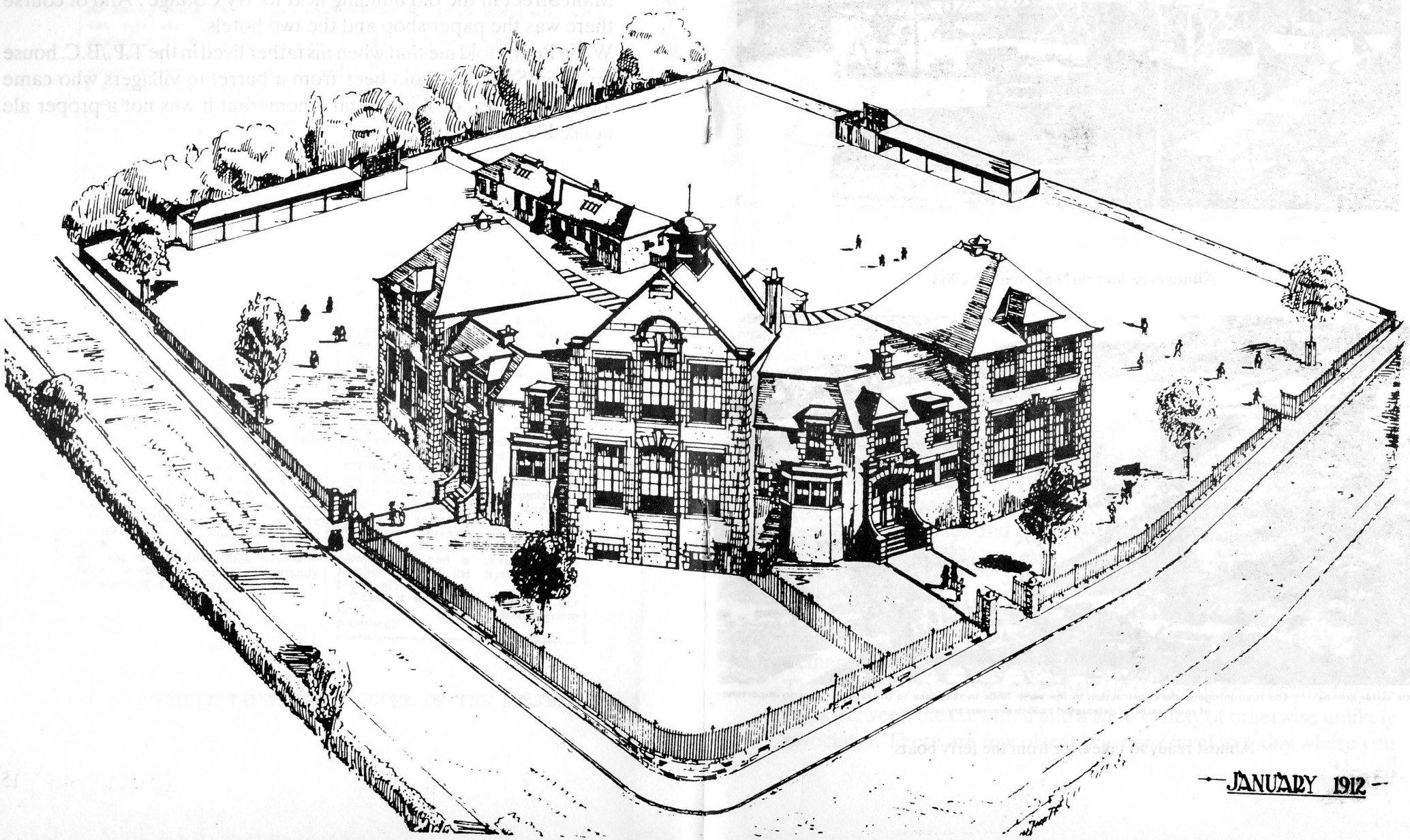
(AN ARTICLE TAKEN FROM A COPY OF THE DUNFERMLINE PRESS)

ran the Post Office next to Stocks and sold toys, Knitting wool, patterns and buttons, and ran the Christmas club.Mrs Frazer sold sweets and lemonade from her house in Main Street and there was the chip shop in Battery Road (where the flats are now). There was even a Doctors surgery in 'Hampton Court' which later moved to Main Street in the old building next to 'Ivy Cottage'. And of course there was the paper shop and the two hotels.

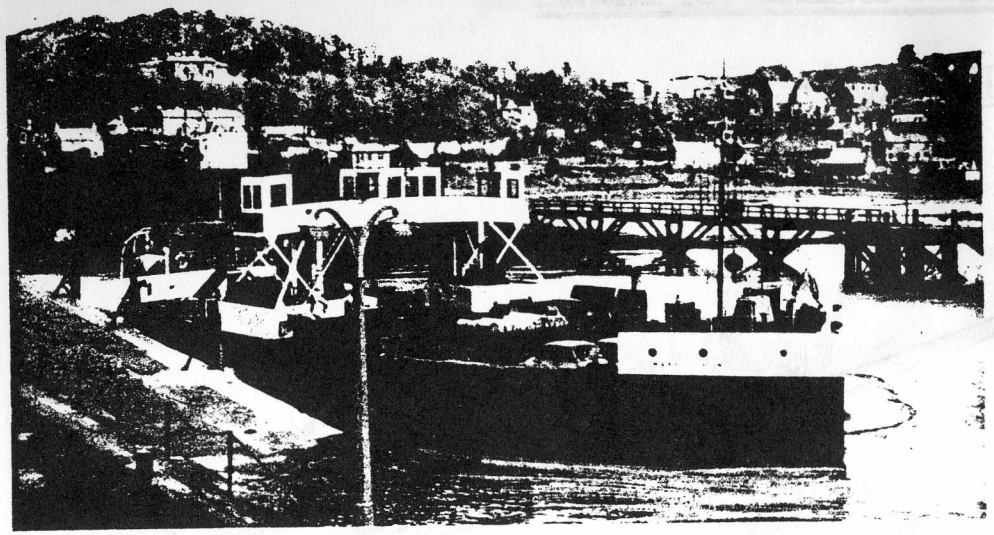
Willie Penny told me that when his father lived in the T.P./B.C. house on Main Street, he sold beer from a barrel to villagers who came along with their own jug to take home but it was not a proper ale house like the hotels.

NEW · SCHOOL · · NORTH · QUEENSFERRY

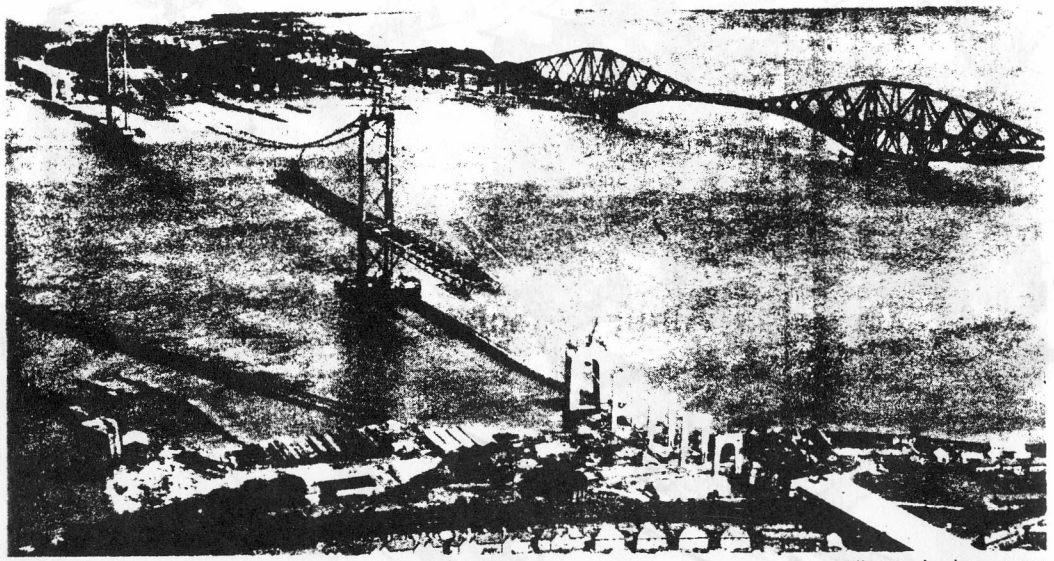
ACCEPTED · DESIGN



JANUARY 1912



Almost the last run ! Sepember 1964



Little sister arrives . . . The road bridge under construction in the early 1960s in response to the rapidly growing importance of road traffic. It celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

Almost ready to take over from the ferry boats

" The Ferry's End "

It was hard to believe, that there would be no more ferry crossings between the North and South villages.For almost 900 years it had been a way of life for the villagers, even the building of the greatest cantilever bridge had made little impact on the use of the 'Queensferry Passage'. Now there was this suspension road bridge opened up and it was killing off the ferryboat business. Exactly how much of an impact this was to have on village life in North Queensferry was seriously underestimated. While the work of constructing the bridge was in progress it could not be perceived that such quietude would fall upon the village.
The construction brought work to some of the locals, and it was exciting to watch the progress of the bridge as it stretched out its long skinny arms across the river reaching for it's partners coming from the other side, hopefully to grasp each other in the centre. The days of the ferryboat crossings came to an end on 4th september 1964, when Queen Elizabeth II, having declared the new suspension bridge open, made her way from the shores of Fife to Lothian on one of the last Queensferry Passage crossings.

Once proud ferryboat crewmen found themselves standing mindlessly taking half crown tolls from some disembodied arm sticking out of a car window while pressing a button to raise the barrier. This was morally degrading for men who had been used to navigating the river in all its moods and dealing with all the ranks of the travelling public who admired their skills in handling the ferry boats.

The ferry boats had been a way of life for many in the village. Friends crossed from both sides to visit and, because the South side boasted a cinema, it added an extra dimension to the leisure of the North side. The regular crossing of tradesmen also brought about many friendships between the crewmen and a wide variety of otherwise unlikely associates. There are few places you can travel to today where you

will not find someone who remembers crossing on the ferryboats at Queensferry.
Recently I went into a small gents' draper shop in South Clerk Street, Newington, Edinburgh. When I was paying for my purchases, the elderly couple behind the counter struck up a conversation and the moment I mentioned North Queensferry they spoke of how they had crossed to Fife regularly on the ferry to do business in those days and said how sad it was that they were no longer there as they had enjoyed their sojourns on them.

Another wee story which Jim Taylor told me, was of one very foggy night during the war years. The skipper had decided that they could manage the trip across,despite the fog and the fact that the black out meant there would be no lights from the shore on the other side to help guide them over. When they had been under way some time there was still no sign of the South pier. However, there was a strange sound of music coming from close by. Suddenly they realised what was wrong, they had steered further up river than intended and the music was coming from 'Lochinvar' naval officers club where there was a dance being held. Fortunately they were in no danger and soon made their way back down to South Queensferry pier, albeit a bit later than scheduled.
Jim also remembers one of the old deckhands, Duncan MacDonald, was in the habit of taking his false teeth out to eat his sandwiches. One day they saw him hunting all over the fo'c'sle (fore castle) after tea break looking for his teeth. Apparently he had laid them on the newspaper he had been reading during break and absently screwed it up into a ball then tossed it overboard teeth and all.

Annie Marwood and her sister Margaret Pollock both worked for many years on the ferryboats. They remember one tragic incident which happened in the summer of 1954. A young woman came aboard the boat at South Queensferry with a Downs Syndrome child. When the boat was about half way over the river there was a scream

and the young woman was frantically shouting that the child had fallen overboard. The young deckhand Angus McPherson was a strong swimmer and, without hesitation, he jumped into the river in an attempt to rescue the child. Tragically the undercurrent pulled Angus away and he was drowned. "The terrible thing was that it was almost three weeks later before his body was recovered from further up the river at St. Margaret's Bay, (where the sewage works are now)" says Annie Marwood, "He was such a nice young boy, only nineteen, and he was working during his holidays from Herriot Watt College where he was studying. We all took his death badly because he was a good friend of ours and, from being a wee laddie, he had called my mother 'Auntie'. His father was a captain in the Merchant Navy and When he retired, he became an Inspector on the ferryboats."
Both Annie and Margaret remember that Sundays were usually busy days for passengers crossing the river by boat as, in those days, the law stated that drink could only be served on Sunday to 'Bona Fide' travellers. "It was quite funny, because people from the North side had to go to the South side pubs and those from the South side came over to the pubs on this side, but that law is changed now" said the sisters.



Peggy Ramage's new shop in Brock Street 1954
Left: Mary Valentine, Centre: Young Peggy; Right: Old Peggy

" A Village At War "

It is hard to imagine that a small village such as North Queensferry, could ever have been touched by war.
Carlingnose barracks, along with Inch Garvie Island, played an effective part in the defence of the upper Forth where the Rosyth naval base was a prime target during both the first and second world wars.
Many of the soldiers who were billeted in the barracks at Carlingnose met and married local girls and when the wars were over they made their homes here.
Resident Jim Oliver of 'Weston House' recalls a story about his father who was with the Royal Engineers and posted at Carlingnose.
"My father and some friends who were posted on Inch Garvie went to Edinburgh on a short pass. However they missed the last train back to North Queensferry and decided to walk across the bridge. Well, the lads who were posted on the island, persuaded my father to climb down the centre cantilever with them. Next morning he was reported A.W.O.L. and a search was made for him. Some time later someone suggested that he might have gone to the island and a boat was sent out. When he was brought back to Carlingnose, he was reprimanded and given detention duties, which meant no trips into Edinburgh for him for quite a time."

Peter Roberts remembers the day a German Bomber dropped its lethal cargo close to the bridge and the village. "It was the 16th of October 1939, a lovely sunny afternoon. There were a few ships on the river at anchor and en-route to the Rosyth dockyard, when suddenly there was a kind of swoosh, and the blast of an explosion as a bomb just barely missed the warship H.M.S. Southampton lying at anchor east of the bridge. There were a few of us in the A.R.P. here at the time. Alf Blatchley the local postman, was about to collect the sack of mail to be put on the 2.30pm train to Dunfermline when he

realised what was happening. The mail was forgotten and he took up his post of warden."
"Tommy Ferguson lived at Pierhead and he was also a warden," recalls Peter, "and after the raid was over, he showed everyone a chunk of shrapnel lodged in his tin hat."
"I don't really think the planes wanted to get the bridge," says Peter "I think they were after the warships and, as they were making their way back to Germany, they swooped down and fired their machine guns on H.M.S. Mohawk, which either killed or badly injured quite a few of her crew. It happened so quickly, and unexpectedly and, when it was all over, it was hard to believe that it had happened." The incident was to go down in the annals of war history, with a documentary re-enactment film made with the help of local people and the R.A.F. Balloon Squadron, entitled 'Squadron 992' for the war film archives.

Peter Roberts had a narrow escape one day during the war when he was working on the ferryboats as a deckhand, although it was not Peter who told me the story, Jim Taylor remembers the incident well.
"We were crossing from South to North one day when we saw an object bobbing about in the water, not far from the boat and coming straight for us. Peter shouted out. "That's a mine" and ran for a boat hook. When the mine was close enough, he reached out over the side of the boat with the pole and gently began pushing the thing away from us. Eventually it drifted off upstream from us and we heard later that it had been detonated up by Limekilns.
The thing was however, Peter could not swim, and he had put on one of the old fashioned life jackets which were terribly cumbersome things, with lumps of cork in pockets. When it was almost the last run Peter decided it was safe to take the jacket off and that was when the accident happened; he slipped off the pier and landed in the water. Poor Peter was soaked to the skin and got quite a fright. It was just one of those querks of fate, having worn the jacket all day, the moment he discarded the cumbersome thing, was when he most

needed it!"
The war memorial at the foot of the Brae is solemn testimony enough that, small though North Queensferry may be, her gallant young men (and women) did what had to be done for King and Country during both world wars. Even more there were those who were not afraid to fright for a cause and many went to the aid of their allies of the Spanish Civil War.
Those that came back after the Second World War found very little change in the village. However there were many other adjustments to be made; jobs to be sought, rationing to be coped with and village lifes pace a bit too slow for some young men, who decided to try their luck in the Antipodes or Canada.
Since their emigration of those years, some have returned from time to time on holiday. I am sure that this year of the bridge centennial their will be many whose thoughts will be with the village they once

loved and left.

" School Days "

It is reputed that the first village school in North Queensferry, was set up by the 'Sailors Society' on the site of 'Melinkie Cottage' in Helen Lane in the year 1769.

Only boys of the village had the privilege of education at that time.Later, about 1827, the school on the Brae was built for the increasing population as well as the advancement in education for both boys and girls of the Victorian era.
When the present primary school at Brock Street was built in 1914, the old school on the Brae continued to serve the village community as the Institute for another sixty years.

Boys and girls who attended the new primary, were educated there until the age of fourteen, when they usually left school to take a job. Although the boys and girls were taught together in the same class by the same teacher, they were segregated during play time by a dividing fence in the playground, and had to enter the school by the door allotted to them marked 'boys' and 'girls'. The school records dating back to 1906 make very interesting reading because generations of village families can be traced through them up to present day. There is also a class photograph album dating from 1954 until 1974, where family likeness is easily identifiable generations apart.
It would appear that one thing never changes down through generations of schoolchildren. There comes a time when playing truant seems more fun than going to class. Jenny MacIntosh remembers the time when she and her friends played truant. "Ther was an old railway coach sat behind the station when we were young. When we wanted to play on the beach instead of going to school we would put our books in the coach and collect them again when it was time to go home. Well, one day, when we went to collect our books,the coach was no longer there. The next day when we went to school, we were

sent for by the headmaster. As we lined up before his desk, we saw our books laid out on it. The old coach had been sent to the repair yard and the stationmaster had found our books and taken them to the school. Well, I can tell you we did not play truant again for some time after that."

The day of the first air raid in 1939 was a day when John Taylor and the then headmaster's son had played truant to go fishing. When the bombs began dropping the boys rowed for the shore as fast as they could, and learned their lesson from that experience.

Mary Valentine (Burns) remembers the time she was caught cheating, having copied homework from a friend. "I was not very good at arithmetic," recalls Mary "and my friend May Colquhoun was the best in the class. I had forgotten to do my homework this day and asked May to let me copy her work. I got full marks that day but Mr Wilson called me out to the blackboard and, handing me the chalk, told me to show the class how to work the answers out. Of course I couldn't do them so I was found out and I had to write out 100 line of 'I must not cheat and copy homework' " Mary laughs and says "It's a good job I was better at writing than arithmetic."
Mary is very proud of the fact that her great grandson David Greer, is now the fourth generation of her family to attend the North Queensferry Primary School.

When world war II was declared, North Queensferry Primary school was taken over by the military and, from 28th August 1939 until it reopened on 9th November 1942, all the 'Ferry children' attended Inverkeithing school on a part time basis. The register shows that 110 children were re-enrolled on that momentous day in November, their ages ranging from 5 years old to 12 years old. The following year of 1943 saw the exodus of 43 of these moving on to higher grade

schools.

" A Different Kind Of War "

Having had the privilege of reading through the school log books from 1906, it is evident that the village life style left much to be desired especially from the sanitary aspect. The majority of homes had little in the way of basic facilities. Outside toilets (often dry), cold water only taps (if you were lucky) indoor, or communal wash house once a week. Paraffin oil lamps, and coal stoves for cooking as well as heating the home.

Where there were four or more children in the family it must have been a struggle trying to keep them well and healthy.
The battle often resulted in epidemic outbreaks of many diseases which are now curbed or eliminated through vaccination and anti-toxin medication.
When the more modern council houses of Whinney Knowe were built in 1934 and Brock Street in 1938, many of the families who had been housed in the small cramped Bruntons buildings were re-housed. Families who had lived in similar conditions at Cruikness were also decanted to the 'Ferry' which must have made a marked difference to them as the new houses had hot and cold water on tap with bathrooms and electric light as well as modern cookers of the time. For those of us who take all these things for granted, a glimpse into the last century should make us very grateful for all the medical and technical scientific improvements which have been developed since that era.
During the school year of 1910 there were serious outbreaks of mumps, scarlet fever, and deadly diptheria, claiming the lives of several school children and also one of their teachers. These outbreaks continued for many years in the old school on the brae, without ever finding out the cause, despite having the school closed for disinfecting and drains dug up for inspection, by the Fife Health Board of the time. Absenteeism was the major concern in the Log

Books with the main cause invariably being childrens' ailments of measles. chicken pox, mumps and occasionally ring worm, which sometimes the teachers would fall victim to as well. When these cases appeared, the school doctor would be called in to check the pupils in order to find the source. When the source could be identified, there was a period of quarantine for the whole family concerned. The log books confirm that this actually did very little to contain the spread throughout the school as many of the families had close contact outwith school activity.

I am happy to say however that reading the school log book was not all doom and gloom. One of the male teachers, a Mr Young, was in the habit of taking himself off on unofficial sick leave, often for two or more weeks at a time. The then school board made an entry in the log in the year 1916 stating that all teachers must report to them with a medical certificate in future illness.
This particular teacher absented himself once more during that year, on the pretext of having business in Edinburgh. When he had not returned for duty the following week there was concern noted in the log, then a letter was received from the absent gentleman stating that he had enlisted in the Army and would the board please keep his job open for him with pay until the war ended. Full marks for trying Mr Young but the school board very pointedly dismissed him on account of his previous poor record of attendance. Which must have been the equivalent of being 'sacked'.

A few more brighter excerpts from the school log book, were the following."Robert Carmichael, Jemima Dowie, Lizzie Cuthell and Williamina Dow were presented with 'Silver' medals by the Scottish Band of Hope Union for their excellent essays on 'Alcohol - what it is and what it does' " (this was dated July 1907). Another, taken from September 1911 on the same theme "Mr Crosbie an agent of the 'Scottish Band of Hope' gave pupils an illustrated lecture on 'Our Bodies and Alcohol', which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone."

It would appear that the 'Temperance Society' also was in the habit of presenting book tokens to the pupils, (I wonder how many of them turned out to be abstainers).
The log book reveals a comprehensive and graphic description of the weather pattern in the last ninety years or so, apart from school holidays, when school was closed, every entry bears a comment on the inclemency of the prevailing weather at the time. There were frequent rain and wind storms, in the months of May and September, often resulting in absenteeism through the lack of suitable attire for the children in the poorer families. The months of January and February are described as bitterly cold, with either severe frost or several inches of snow, again with much absenteeism from colds and influenza, with March and April being the months when mumps, measles, scarlet fever and diptheria showed up in epidemic form. The strange fact of all this is that when I was speaking to the villagers who have contributed to the reminiscences, no one mentioned either the weather or illness, in the time of their school days. Which perhaps



The Bald Family gathering for the Golden Wedding of grandparents taken about 1880 behind Brunton's hall

means that it was not quite as bad as the log book depicted.

" The Birthday Party "

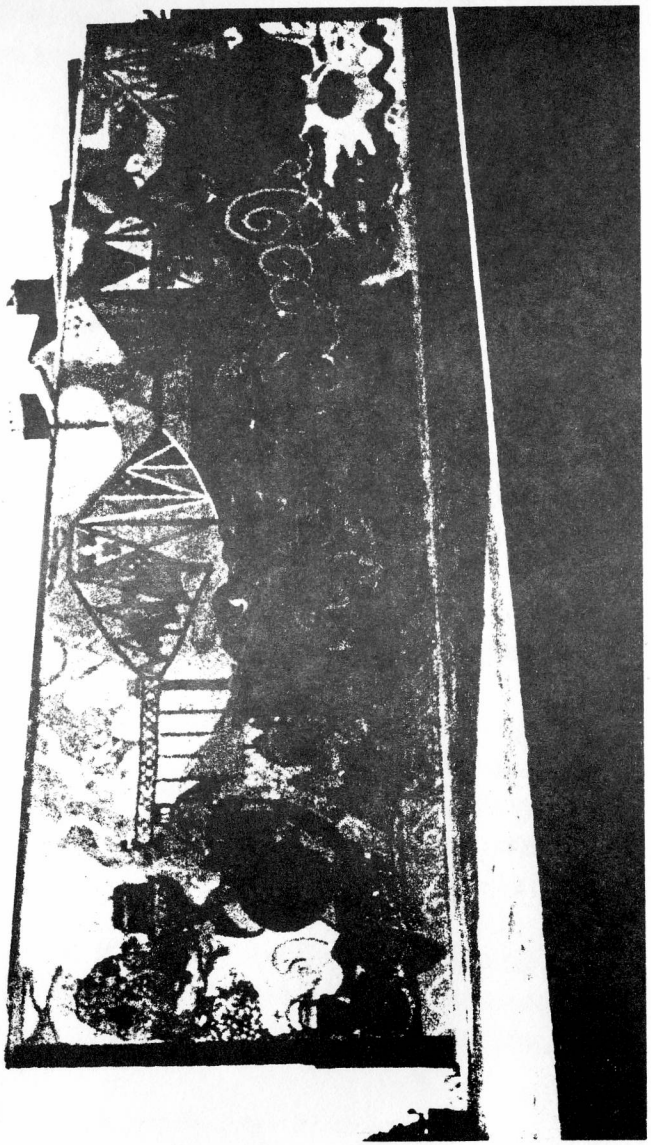
Like any other big occassion, the planning of the Centennial Celebrations began many months beforehand. Some three years earlier in late 1987, plans were being assembled for all kinds of fabulous projects which, it was hoped would make this year the most memorable, for the villagers on both sides of the bridge, since it had first been built.

However, there were quite a few drawbacks, concerning some of the more spectacular plans, such as the 'Glass Elevator' idea for veiwing the bridge from a height. Money, or rather the lack of it, was one of the drawbacks and a lot of wasted time, which meant having to relook at the more modest proposals. March 4th, 1990 began the celebrations on the North side by unveiling the colourful artistic community project which was attended by several distinguished dignitaries. Lord and Lady Elgin, Malcolm Rifkind (Secretary of State) and Sir Robert Reid (Chairman of British Rail) along with several hundred villagers and visitors, made the start of the day quite memorable.

Much of what took place in the way of celebrations in North Queensferry, was achieved by the local community, which was even more gratifying for everyone involved.

The mural depicting the village past and present, was a concerted effort of the young and older generations of villagers, and inspired artistic talents otherwise unknown in many of them. It now graces the railway station signal house wall for passengers of all the trains either stopping at or visiting the North Queensferry station platform.

In the evening there was an ecumenical church service which was relayed by radio across the river between the Parish Churches of North and South Queensferry's. During the service of the North Queensferry church, there was an interesting reminiscence chat between Peter Roberts and myself which everyone in the congrega-



tion seemed to enjoy very much because Peter has led such a varied and interesting life. Mrs Anne Vallance sang a solo of 'Amazing Grace' which was also shown appreciation by the gathering.
The evening was rounded off with a childrens lamp light procession, winding its illuminated path from upper to lower village, then a marvellous display of search lights trained on the structure of the bridge ending with an hour long burst of fireworks.All in all it was a very nice start to the Birthday Party.

As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, the village has been without community gathering facilities for almost twenty years now, so, we have used the opportunity this centennial year has offered to capitalise on some fund raising projects in an attempt to build a village centre. Although a community grant is being sought, the village community are expected to contribute a share which is £25,000. The efforts of the many villagers throughout the year should see the 'Community Centre Fund' with a healthy £5,000 bank balance, which I consider a very encouraging start, Although it is still only one fifth of the required amount.

Throughout the summer months there continued a variety of events, village street stalls selling home crafts and produce, highland and country dancers, brass and jazz bands and finally in August a well produced historic pageant which was well received by villagers and visitors alike.

The 'Grand Finale' took place on Sunday 7th October, with a programme of special events which attracted many thousands of visitors from near and afar.

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