

# heritage

Spring 2009

## Robert Burns and Highland Mary



*The Burns statue as it may appear after restoration; painting by W I Millan, DA (Edin)*

The Bathgate Historic Conservation Society has set itself the challenge of restoring the heavily vandalised 1880s marble statue of Burns and Highland Mary that has languished in a store in Bathgate for many years.

The work, by the sculptor Hamilton P MacCarthy, was gifted to the burgh of Bathgate in the early 1950s and once stood in Kirkton Park but was taken from display following damage by vandals.

Fundraising efforts are now well underway and the campaign was recently featured on Radio Scotland and Scottish Television.

It is hoped that once restored the statue can be given a new setting in the new council buildings planned for South Bridge Street, Bathgate.

## Linlithgow Burgh Halls

The work to convert the Burgh halls is now well underway with the repairs to the tower and roof largely complete. This has allowed work to commence on the interior. Although redevelopment in the 1960s removed most of the original foundations, archaeologists have been appointed to ensure that nothing of importance is missed.

The wisdom of this careful approach has been confirmed by the discovery of an old coin. This has been identified as a Nuremberg jeton of Dauphine type, made for the French market and is likely to date from the 1480s and 1490s or slightly later. It is fascinating to speculate on who owned, and presumably lost, the coin. The will be placed on view in due course, hopefully in the special historical display cabinet proposed for the finished building.



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[westlothian.gov.uk](http://westlothian.gov.uk)



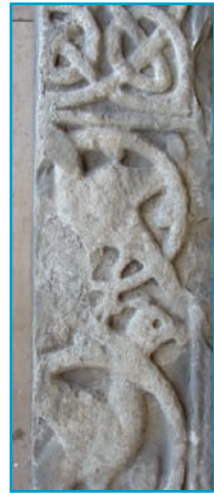
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West Lothian  
Council

# Building on our artistic heritage

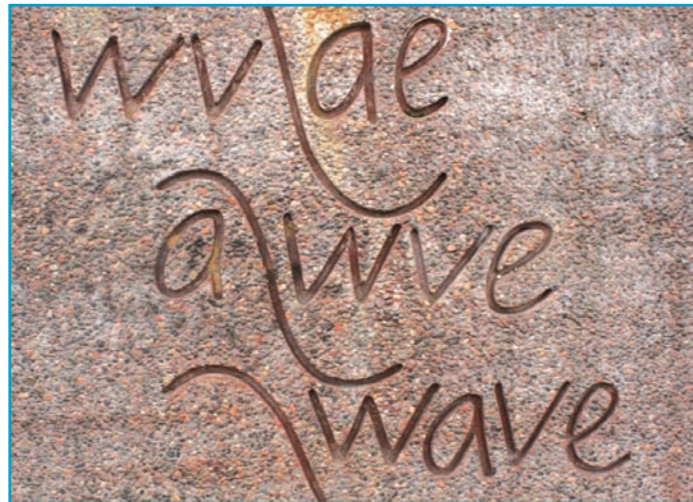
West Lothian has a dynamic heritage of public sculpture. This includes the important early carved stones housed at Abercorn, a 13th century effigy of a bishop at Kirkton, Bathgate, the many seventeenth and eighteenth century gravestones in our historic kirkyards, Linlithgow's wells and a number of important architectural carvings on buildings.



Detail of a carved stone, Abercorn

In addition to this legacy there are a large number of more contemporary works to be found principally in Livingston. Those on the roundabouts are the best known but there are several others in open spaces around the town. The council is currently in the process of itemising all such heritage assets in its care as a first stage in ensuring that their special needs are recognised and planned for. This will also allow for the history of each sculpture to be written up, for associated material to be archived and for the publication of material on the art works.

The council has also adopted a new Public Art Strategy, backed by planning policy, which requires all developers of large housing or retail developments to provide through



Wave Poem, 1976, at Livingston, by the internationally renowned poet, writer, artist and gardener Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925-2006).

projects or financial contributions, for the provision of new public art in the communities affected by the new development. A new Arts Development Officer for visual and public art, Camille Archer, has been appointed and will be working to collate information on existing public art and to ensure the effective commissioning of new work under the strategy.

Copies of the Public Art Strategy should be available from April 2009 and can be obtained from Camille at 01506 777587.

# West Lothian and the Forgotten War: Korea 1950 - 53

If you drive over the Bathgate Hills from Bathgate to Linlithgow, you will pass the National Korean War Memorial. The Memorial is the only one of its kind in Britain and was opened on the 27th June 2000 to mark the 50th anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

Many people know very little about the war. Even men who fought in it refer to it as the Forgotten War, but West Lothian Council Museums Service is now leading a project to put this right. With funding from the Big Lottery, local schoolchildren and veterans have been brought together as a first step to creating an online exhibition for schools about the Korean War and other experiences of National Service. The participants recently met to explore the Memorial together.

The Lothian and West of Scotland branch of the Korean Veterans' Association leases the Memorial land from West Lothian Council to provide a place for reflection and meditation for the friends and relatives of the fallen and for the surviving veterans. The names of the 1090 British servicemen who gave their lives are listed in regimental groups inside a pantile-roofed, wooden pagoda. The pagoda is set in a garden, landscaped within paths in the shape of the yin yang symbol which appears on the South Korean flag. One hundred and ten Korean pine trees have been planted, each representing ten men serving in UK regiments who died in the conflict.

As you walk towards the pagoda the path on your right heading towards the picnic tables is known as United Nations Avenue. There are 21 trees planted along this path, one for each country, which fought in the UN force to defend South Korea against Communist aggression.

The main partner in the West Lothian and the Forgotten War project is the Workers' Educational Association, who are interviewing volunteer veterans and recording their experiences. Nearly 90% of the British troops who fought in Korea were National Servicemen aged from 19 years. While the young men of the time expected to leave home for eighteen months of military service, they were quite unprepared for the extremes of climate and fighting over hilly country which they faced in Korea.

Both the veterans and the children who are learning from them are being filmed to create a record of the project and to provide footage for the online exhibition. The exhibition will be put online by the Their Past Your Future 2 project, funded by the Big Lottery and organized by Museums Galleries Scotland to gather oral history from veterans of conflicts after the Second World War. Besides the local project on the Korean War, another nine projects are underway led by museums all over Scotland.



The South Korean Flag with its yin yang symbol which represents balance or harmony between opposites.



The current military attaché at the Korean Embassy visited the memorial in December 2008 to express South Korea's continuing gratitude to British servicemen.

## Museum venues

### Spring/Summer opening times

<b>Almond Valley Heritage Trust</b>	Millfield, Livingston Village, Tel: 01506 414957, 7 days a week: 10am-5pm <a href="http://www.almondvalley.co.uk">www.almondvalley.co.uk</a>
<b>Armada Library</b>	West Main Street, Armadale, Tel: 01501 678400. Mon to Fri: 10.30am-5.30pm, Sat: 9.30pm-1pm. <a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries">www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries</a>
<b>Bennie Museum Trust</b>	9-11 Mansefield St, Bathgate, Tel: 01506 634944. April - September: Mon - Sat: 11am - 4pm <a href="http://www.benniemuseum.org.uk">www.benniemuseum.org.uk</a>
<b>Blackridge Community Museum</b>	Blackridge Library, Craig Inn Centre, Blackridge, Tel: 01501 752396 Tues: 2pm-6.30pm, Wed: 9.30am-12.30pm & 1.30pm-4.30pm, Thurs: 2pm-6.30pm <a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries">www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries</a>
<b>Broxburn Library</b>	West Main Street, Broxburn, Tel: 01506 775600. Mon to Fri: 10am-6pm, Sat: 9.30am-1pm <a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries">www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries</a>
<b>Hopetoun House Preservation Trust</b>	Queensferry, Tel: 0131 331 2451. Daily: 10.30 - 5pm, Last admission 4pm, Fri 10 April - Sun 27 Sept '09 <a href="http://www.hopetounhouse.com">www.hopetounhouse.com</a>
<b>Linlithgow Heritage Trust</b>	Annet House, 143 High Street, Linlithgow, Tel: 01506 670677 Mon to Sat: 11am-5pm. Sun: 1pm-4pm. Opening Season: Fri 1 April to Sat 31 October <a href="http://www.linlithgowstory.org.uk">www.linlithgowstory.org.uk</a>
<b>Linlithgow Canal Centre &amp; Museum</b>	Canal Basin, Manse Road, Linlithgow . Tel: 01506 671215 (ansaphone) 01506 843194 (bookings) Sat and Sun: 2pm-5pm, 11 April to 27 September. Daily 2pm-5pm - July and August <a href="http://www.lucs.org.uk">www.lucs.org.uk</a>
<b>Linlithgow Library</b>	The Vennel, Linlithgow, Tel: 01506 775490. Mon to Fri: 10am-5.30pm, Sat: 9.30am-1pm <a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries">www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries</a>
<b>Whitburn Community Museum</b>	Whitburn Library, Union Road, Whitburn, Tel: 01501 678050. Mon to Fri: 10am-5.30pm, Sat: 9.30am-1pm <a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries">www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries</a>

If you or anyone you know has memories of National Service in general or of the Korean War, please contact Elizabeth Henderson on 01506-776347 or [museums@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:museums@westlothian.gov.uk)

## Robert Burns, Freeman of Linlithgow?

The publication of the Kilmarnock Edition in the summer of 1786 established Robert Burns firmly on the Scottish literary scene. During the next 18 months, Burns spent much of his time travelling around Scotland. In late August 1787 he set off with his friend William Nichol to tour the Highlands, and on 25 August he came to Linlithgow. In the diary of his tour, he noted a visit to the Palace and the Church. In the evening he attended a meeting at the local Masonic Lodge, and left the following day.

There is no record of Burns ever visiting Linlithgow again. However, at a meeting of Linlithgow Town Council on 4 January 1859, Alexander Thomas, a resident of the town, produced a burgess ticket in favour of Burns. This showed that the poet had been admitted a Burgess & Guild Brother of the Ancient & Royal Burgh of Linlithgow on 16 November 1787. The document was signed by Provost James Andrew, and four bailies.

Mr Thomas explained that he had been given the document by a Glasgow merchant, Nelson Mitchell, the younger brother of Stephen Mitchell who had moved the family tobacco manufacturing business from Linlithgow to Glasgow in 1827. One of the signatories on the Burgess ticket in 1787 was Bailie Stephen Mitchell, the grandfather of Nelson and Stephen Mitchell. It may be, therefore, that the burgess ticket had been obtained by Bailie Mitchell and passed down through the family to his grandson.

The councillors present at the meeting in 1859 examined the document, declared it genuine and instructed the clerk to copy it into the minutes. No record of Burns' admission as a burgess appears in the council records of 1787, but the councillors explained this by saying that at that period the Council had been less than punctilious in recording all its business! If Burns was indeed admitted a burgess of Linlithgow, he would have had to receive the honour and swear the burgess oath in person. There is no other known visit by Burns to Linlithgow, but it's possible he may have made an unrecorded visit to see his old Mauchline friend James Smith, a partner in a calico printworks at Linlithgow, during which the burgess admission was made.

In 1942 the Provost reported to the council that James Miller, a native of Linlithgow then resident in Glasgow, had presented him with a copy of the burgess ticket issued to Burns. The council instructed the clerk to have the copy framed and hung in the Council Chamber.

We started with one mystery and we finish with another. What happened to the copy burgess ticket given to the council in 1942? It is not included in the list of artefacts from the town's historical collection which was lodged with the Royal Museum of Scotland in 1975 and returned in 1990 to become the nucleus of the Linlithgow Story. Perhaps it, and the original produced by Mr Thomas in 1859 are lying forgotten amongst someone's papers. If you know where it is, please tell us!

**Alan Young, Linlithgow Heritage Trust**

## Calling all Guides

An exhibition is coming to West Lothian to celebrate 100 years of Girl Guiding in the area. The centenary year is 2010 and the display will be seen in five venues between autumn 2009 and spring 2011.

The aim of the display is to show the development of Girl Guiding in West Lothian over the past century and encourage volunteers to come forward to train as guiders and carry on the good work into the next century.

Could you help? Do you have memorabilia to lend? The Guides are looking for badges, old uniforms (including hats!), handbooks, pictures, awards, trophies or anything else to create an eye-catching display.

**For more information or to offer items for the exhibition, please contact Alison Ashford, Girl Guiding West Lothian County Commissioner on 01506 881032.**



## The Incorporation of Wrights

**The Archives and Records Centre has recently received into trust the records of the Incorporation of Wrights of Linlithgow. The papers include minutes, accounts and statute records, 1595–1868.**

Trade incorporations were local groupings of tradesmen, who came together both for common benefit and to control the working practices of their trade. Eight trade incorporations existed in Linlithgow and exercised a large degree of control over the economy of Linlithgow. Members of the Incorporation of Wrights (specialist joiners) had a monopoly over all joinery work undertaken in the burgh.

Aspiring wrights had to serve a five-year apprenticeship before progressing to the position of journeyman. After three years as a journeyman, men were able to request an 'essay'. Forty days were usually allowed to complete the essay, which commonly involved the construction of a sash window. If his essay was good enough, he would pay 'freedom money', and finally become a freeman of the incorporation.



*This sash window required skilful workmanship, and was probably constructed by a freeman of the Linlithgow Incorporation of Wrights.*



*Fraternity of Wrights banner. By kind permission of Linlithgow Heritage Trust, Annet House, Linlithgow.*

In return for tri-annual payments, the Incorporation of Wrights also provided help to their members in times of hardship. This might cover the payment of funeral expenses or sickness pay, and was an early form of social insurance. It was in bodies like this that the foundations were laid for the modern welfare state.

The Incorporation of Wrights was a tight-knit grouping. Although skills were an important factor for those entering the trade, most entrants had some sort of family tie to the Incorporation, and these were always documented in the minutes of the Incorporation.

Social occasions were an important part of the incorporation. During the Riding of the Marches, members rode through the town before attending a celebratory dinner. The account books indicate that ale was considered a vital accompaniment to the yearly election of Deacon. A year after the 1854 election, the members were still in disagreement over who had actually been elected deacon – too much ale perhaps?

The powers of trade incorporations were brought to an end in 1846, when the Recissory Act removed their right to exercise monopolies over local trades. This brought an eventual end to the Linlithgow Incorporation of Wrights. However, a Fraternity of Wrights continued to offer some measure of social insurance to wrights in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

**If you are interested in viewing these papers phone the Archives and Records Centre on 01506 773770**

# Appeal for Deposits

**The West Lothian Archive and Records Centre are hoping to extend the collection of records held at its archives at Deans Industrial Estate in Livingston.**

At present we have a large collection of council records, but a relatively small amount of privately deposited material. We would like your help to remedy this. With the help of local people, we will have the opportunity to develop our archive to reflect the diverse interests and nature of the local community.



*Inside our Archive*

## What are we looking for?

We are interested in the records of community groups, churches, political parties, trade unions or any other body with connections to the West Lothian area. This could include minute books, accounts, leaflets, programmes, photographs or any other paper-based records. The historical value of these documents will increase in time, and they will become an important resource for both researchers and the local community in years to come.

## What can we offer?

We strive to preserve all documents deposited with us. By depositing their records in the Archives, local groups and societies can ensure that an enduring record of their activities will be accessible to future generations.

We also work to prevent any deterioration to records in our collection. Our archives are fitted with an air-conditioning system which regulates both temperature and humidity levels. As an added

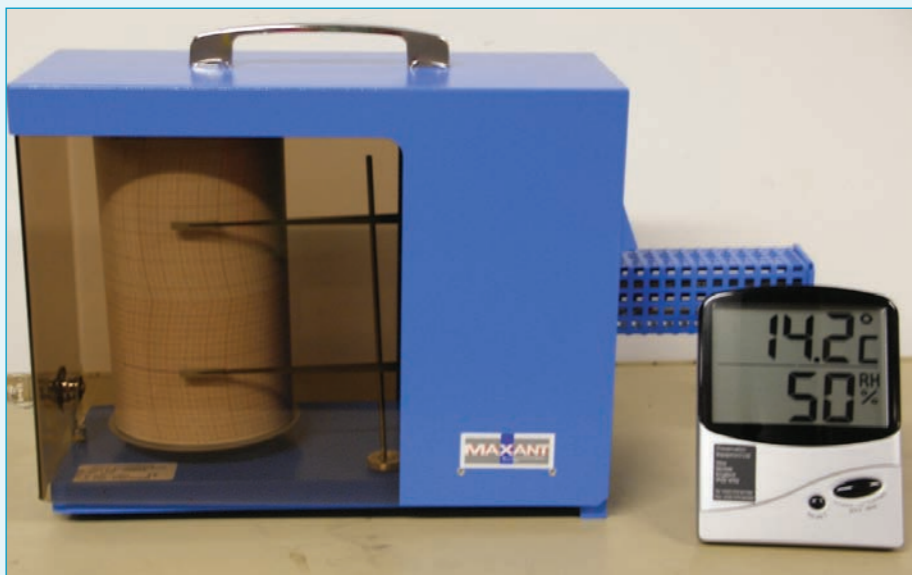
measure of protection, records are stored in acid-free boxes which prevent damage caused by pollutants and contact with other materials. We also closely monitor environmental conditions using a thermo-hygrograph. This measures any fluctuations in temperature or humidity, allowing us to rectify potentially detrimental conditions.

## Find out more

If you want to find out more about the archives, or you have something which may be of interest to us, then contact us on 01506 773770.

Alternatively, you can drop into the archives. We are located at Dunlop Square, Deans Industrial Estate Livingston and are open 9-12 & 2-5, Mon–Thurs, and 9-12 & 2-4 on Fridays.

If you are interested in depositing with us we would be happy to arrange a tour of our centre.



*Environmental Monitoring Equipment*

# Home an awa



*Jane Strathearn of Seafeld and her family enjoy their new life in Australia, 1951.*

In every part of the world, names of Scottish origin are to be found – the legacy of centuries of Scottish emigration. Some of the emigrants went reluctantly, forced overseas by poverty, unemployment or ruthless landlords. Others went willingly, hoping to make a better life for themselves.

Descendants of some of these emigrants will be visiting Scotland in this year of Homecoming, and homecoming has been chosen as the theme of this year's Scottish Local History Week, 20-25 April. To tie in with it, West Lothian Local History Library has produced a display on emigration from West Lothian.

Of all the Scottish counties, West Lothian had the fifth highest rate of population loss in the second half of the 19th century. Unemployment and recession played their part in forcing people to look overseas for work. But often it was the young and ambitious who sought a better life abroad, more opportunities for their families and a higher standard of living. Sometimes these ambitions were fulfilled, sometimes they were not. A surprising one in three of emigrants returned home – whether because of success or failure or homesickness.

The exhibition looks at why they went, where they went and how they went, and at the experience of some of these emigrants in their new lives. Entry is free and the display is open during normal opening hours. 'Home an awa: leaving West Lothian' will be on display at:

**Whitburn Library, West Main Street, 20 April – 31 May**  
**Carmondean Library, Carmondean Centre, Livingston, 1 June – 16 July**  
**Linlithgow Library, The Vennel, 20 July – 28 August.**

*For more information phone 01506 776331, or email [sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk)*

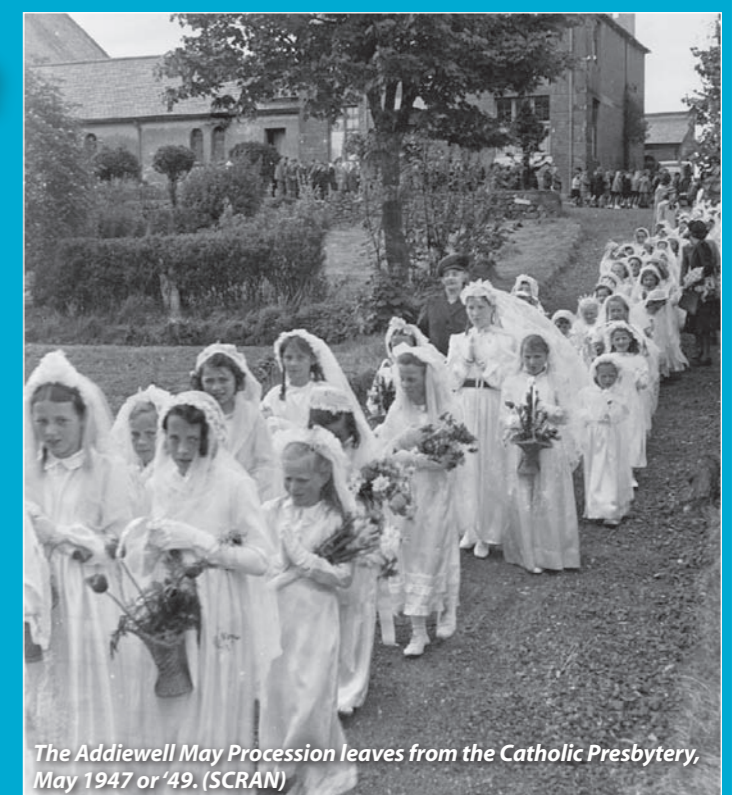
## Heritage online

West Lothian Libraries provides free access to two of the best online resources for local history in Scotland.

SCRAN – the Scottish Cultural Resources Network – is a database of several hundred thousand images of Scottish history and culture, past and present. Users of West Lothian Local History Library have free access to the full resources of SCRAN through the library's subscription. [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk).

All West Lothian library members can get free access online to the Statistical Accounts of Scotland, a goldmine of information on Scottish life in the past two centuries.

<http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/>



*The Addiewell May Procession leaves from the Catholic Presbytery, May 1947 or '49. (SCRAN)*

# Linlithgow for Bells

Glasgow for Bells, Linlithgow for wells; so goes the old saying, but perhaps it should have been Linlithgow for wells and Bells – for one family with the surname Bell can be traced in Linlithgow from the late 16th century until 1769.

The Bells acquired part of the land belonging to the Carmelite Friars, Little Kettleston, Montjoy, Avontoun and some 200 acres in the parish of Muiravonside. The first acquisitions were made by Nicholas Bell, a baxter (baker), and his wife Margaret Dick in 1600 when they bought three acres at Little Kettleston and nine years later, two and a half acres of the Friar's land. Avontoun came to the family in 1695 when it was passed to William Bell by George Bell, presumably a relative.

Four generations of the Bell family occupied the town clerk's post for almost 100 years. In 1667 Alexander was appointed joint town clerk with his brother-in-law, Andrew Ker. His son William succeeded him in the post, followed by his son Alexander who ultimately shared the post with his son Michael. They were all notary publics and clearly occupied an important position in the town. Alexander was the town clerk at the time of the Forty-Five Rebellion, a post he occupied until 1766 when he resigned along with his son. Both were dead by 1769. As well as being sheriff clerk, collector of taxes for the shire and town clerk, Bell was Linlithgow's postmaster. He had been accused by his cousin Dundas of Philpstoun and Provost Bucknay of opening their mail during the 1745 uprising. Dundas and Bucknay were

sympathisers and met at the Bridge Inn with other Jacobites, whereas Bell was vehemently opposed and raised the Linlithgow Militia in support of the Hanoverians.

Poor Bell did not succeed in clearing his name and suffered the indignity of being imprisoned for two weeks in the Tolbooth. He was also dismissed from his postmaster duties, a post first occupied by his father when the GPO was set up in 1695. The Avontoun estate had to be sold to defray legal costs, and it eventually passed into the hands of Robert Blair. For more information about the mansion Blair built at Avontoun, see the Spring 2007 issue of the newsletter, available at the Local History Library.

**Laurie Alexander**

## West Lothian History and Amenity Society

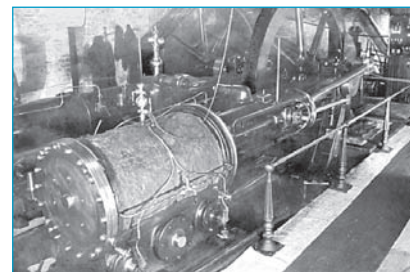
*The next meeting of the WLHAS is on 15 April at 7.30pm in Ecclesmachan Village Hall, and will be a talk by Prof. Robert McKean on the Scots in Imperial Russia.*

*The 2008-09 season concludes with the AGM on 20 May at 7.30pm in St. Joseph's Primary School, Linlithgow, followed by a talk by Laurie Alexander on the history of Manuel Nunnery and the surrounding area, including the river Avon and its mills. This is original research and has revealed a lot of hitherto unknown facts.*

*The Summer Outing this year will be on Saturday 23 May to the Summerlee Heritage Centre, Coatbridge and then to the National Trust for Scotland property, Holmwood House in Cathcart.*

*This is an opportunity to see the new Summerlee, the museum of Scottish industrial life, after its recent £10 million redevelopment. There is something for everyone, engineering, mining, transport and with lot of social history thrown in. Celebrate our industrial Heritage and appreciate the life of those who lived and worked then.*

*Holmwood House, designed by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson for a local papermaker, has been sympathetically restored at great expense. It is set in beautiful parkland and will be a pleasant contrast to the severity of the industrial past.*



*The bus will uplift at Bathgate, Linlithgow and Bo'ness as usual. All are welcome and those interested should contact any member of the committee or Sandy Thomson, Tel. 01506 843870, for a booking form and further details.*

### Comments? Suggestions?

*If you've enjoyed reading this newsletter – or not enjoyed it – let us know. We'd like to hear the sort of articles that interest you, and your comments, suggestions, and feedback will be welcome. If you have any suggestions for future articles, or for improvements that might be made, don't hesitate to get in touch.*

**Please contact [sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:sybil.cavanagh@westlothian.gov.uk)**