

The End of an Era at Addiewell – Part Two

Catholic Church

The Roman Catholics of Addiewell also had their services in the school until, in 1922, Father Kenny contrived to get a building erected for worship alone, and after looking around settled on the present site.

As this was regarded as a very mossy site, many parishioners doubted the wisdom of building on such an unsecure foundation, but Father Kenny insisted and named the church St Thomas after the doubting members, which name it has retained every since.

Among the well-known clergy who have served at various times at St Thomas's were Canon Murphy, Father Connolly, Father Kelly, Father Mohan and the present parish priest Father McMahon.

Village Life, games and sports

The Institute provided by Scottish Oils Ltd played a prominent part in village life with reading facilities and games of billiards, carpet bowls, draughts and dominoes always available. This centre was in big demand during the recession period between the wars when the oil work remained on a three working, one week idle basis.

Outdoor sports were, of course, not forgotten, and a flourishing curling club existed. A cricket club was first formed in 1870 and, after operating in several different playing fields, finally settled on Mains Park, to the south of the village and adjacent to the main Edinburgh-Ayr road. Among the many well-known players associated with the club through the years were Tommy Sultan, John Rutherford, Alex Hanlon and Harry Scott, who displayed considerable skill with bat and ball.

Football

Football commenced around 1882 with a team called Addiewell Shamrock at a ground at Cuthill, but eventually Campbell Street park became the home ground and many's the time an important game was staged on its corrugated surface.

Talent was not lacking in this sphere, as Paddy Crossan and Johnny Hanlon, both former Hearts' FC players, were of considerable skill, and the Meechans and McGintys were not far behind. The story goes of one game played by locals which ended up in a free fight, such was the rivalry which existed in those far off days.

'Pedestrians' [runners]

Foot running was also popular at this time, with most of the games being professional. Runners ran under assumed names. Thus Johnny Hanlon became J. Harris of Addiewell, a half-miler of repute who won several handicaps locally in Glasgow and even in England.

Bob Cramb ran as H. Hunter, another stalwart of the 'ped' ranks who used the cricket pavilion and track to the full in training hard for the summer round of the sports.

Bowling Club

A bowling club was opened in 1930 just off the site of the old square in front of Watt Street, and this flourished for a long number of years until lack of money forced its closure last year [1966].

William Robinson and Alex Auld were prominent officials and enthusiastic bowlers and Johnnie McWhinney a keen groundsman during its heyday.

Musical life

Musical life also flourished with Band of Hope choirs, kinderspeils run by the late Davy Jack, and amateur dramatics. There was Catherine Mentiplay, a noted concert singer who was born in Addiewell.

Teachers

Among the scholastic section of the community, Mr Jack, school master of Addiewell Public School was held in great respect by all, with Mr Harold Brady and Miss Lavery, notables at Addiewell R.C. school.

Famous natives

Prominent in public life, another Addiewell native was Prof. W. Rennie, graduate of Glasgow University, and an Inspector of Schools. Dr Gibson Aitken a brilliant lecturer during the war and prominent in County affairs at the present time (sic).

Political views were expressed on the "Braes" and at Livingstone Street Corner, where Jim McCallum held meetings of the Socialist party in the evenings and at weekends.

Nicknames

It would be an omission if nicknames were not included as this was part and parcel of Addiewell life. Most amusing they were, with some given here: Soda, Jammer, Tackie, Badger, Duke and Tookie : all characters who contributed to give Addiewell its pawky humour and character.

End of Livingstone Street and the old village

Many will remember Shipley Close and how you raced through it on a dark night. Mrs Dawson's shop was another familiar landmark and at present Miss Kate Carroll's shop which will shortly have to be demolished when the street is finally hauled down. Now Livingstone Street is silent, save for Mrs Jenny Walters of 95 Livingstone Street. All the others have gone and the contractors' hammer is about to fall on the last remaining episode of old Addiewell, which will hold many happy memories of a well-knit, industrious and happy community who were brought up in its surroundings. Such is progress, but who can forgive anyone a nostalgic glimpse into the past, when men made their own pleasure and the rat race hadn't even begun.

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