

## The end of an era at Addiewell

When the demolition proceeds of Livingstone Street, Addiewell, the village of Addiewell as it has existed for a hundred years will have virtually disappeared.

This village came into being when James (Paraffin) Young, operating at Bathgate, transferred his attention to Addiewell, as his supply of shale [*in fact, it was cannel coal, not shale*] was running out. He set up Young's Oil Co. Ltd there in 1964. Shale pits were sunk and a large oil works built, and several rows of houses erected.

### Wee Rows

Some were running north and south and comprised four streets together with a row of foremen's houses, and two smaller rows running east and west formed what was known as the Wee Rows of the village. Three of these were of the single-end type of house [one-room], the others "but-and bens" [two rooms]. The foremen's houses were of a more substantial nature.

Each house was named after a famous or noted person: Campbell, Simpson, Baker, Graham, Cross, Banks, and Faraday.

A "square" divided this half of the village from the other half to the west, comprising Watt Street, Stephenson Street, Davy Street, and the double-sided Livingstone Street of one hundred houses. These streets were two-storey buildings, with semi-circular outside stairs to the stair-head which gave access to two houses, each with but a single room and kitchen.

### Water Supply

Water was supplied by stand pipes or "wells" in each street, and had to be carried and stored in buckets or tubs within the house. In winter great inconvenience was caused when the wells froze and had to be thawed – there was a trek of half-a-mile to nearby Scolley-burn to replenish stocks if the supply was cut off.

Waste water was disposed of in shallow brick lined ditches (schouchs) which ran the length of the streets, and emptied into the drains below.

No communal wash houses were provided, each householder provided his own, usually a lean-to at the back with a barrel to collect rain water from the rhones. For those with no lean-to, it was common practice to do the washing outside with a brick-built open fire to heat the large pots of water.

### Sanitation

Sanitation by present standards was almost non-existent, and the outstanding in primitive amenities was the privy midden (shunkies). These abominable structures were sited at some distance – but not too great a distance – from the houses. Open on one side where ashes and all other household refuse was thrown in, and closed (not very adequately) on the side which served as a latrine.

Such was the make up of Addiewell around that time, and despite such unclean conditions, the standard of cleanliness, neatness and good breeding was a matter of genuine surprise and admiration. People continually strove and even competed to further their comfort at their own expense.

## **Churches**

A mission church was erected in 1873, sponsored by Free Barclay Congregation, Edinburgh, with John M. Craig as the first missionary. On moving during the First World War to the United Free Church, it took a new site next to the Addiewell School where it still stands, It is now used as a dwelling house, as the church linked with Stoneyburn Church several years before the Second World War.

The old iron building, incidentally was bought and erected as a picture house in nearby Stoneyburn, where it flourished for many a day, but is now the site of modern flats shortly to be occupied.

Among the ministers connected with this church over the years, Mr Goldie and Mr Fraser stand out as being prominent among them.

The Parish Church memorial stone was laid in April 1885, by Mrs Grant, and the Rev. Wm P. McLaren was the first preacher. This church still serves the community today, and many famous names were attached to it including Mr Jamie, Mr Gilfillan, Mr Bell, and at present Mr Rigg and missionary, Mr G. Reid.

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