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DUG UP FROM AN AYRSHIRE CEMETERY

Where is Smithfield? This was question left by Andrew Young's report in *SIHS Bulletin*, no.77 (December 1977). In our subsequent correspondence Andrew and I both learned more about "James McNaughton of Smithfield, railway contractor, maker 1826 - 1832 of the first Newtyle & Dundee railway, one of the earliest railways in Scotland & many other railways roads & bridges. Born 2nd Jan. 1802. Died 9 Feb. 1890. Also his wife Ellen Ferrier. Born 2 Jan. 1817. Died 4 June 1897" and their lives and times and also those of one of their offspring. James McNaughton's estate, £30 860-8s-4d, was confirmed in Ayr on 14 May 1890.

Smithfield is near Tarbolton in Ayrshire and seems to have been owned by McNaughton before 1870 but there is no evidence that he resided there. James McNaughton's monument in Ayr Cemetery is certainly a conversation piece — and not just because of the mystery of Smithfield. Its over-romantic arch design (a pity — if it had been similar to part of one of his beautiful viaducts it would have been more appropriate) and intriguing text would appear to owe much to his younger daughter, Euphans Helen, who married John Strain, one of Scotland's most significant engineers. The entry for Strain in the third Volume of the *Biographical Dictionary of Civil Engineers* runs to more than five columns (McWilliam & Chrimes, 2014). Strain also merits five columns by Sheila Hamilton in *the Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography* (Slaven & Checkland, 1986).

James McNaughton was born in Rotmell, Dowally, in the Tay valley, north of Dunkeld, Perthshire. He could well have cut his teeth on the Newtyle & Dundee railway, which opened when he was 30. No names of any of the contractors for the Lots on the Dundee & Newtyle are listed in the more likely publications and it appears these records have been lost (Tennant, 1970; Steel, 1974; Popplewell, 1989; Ferguson, 1995). Popplewell (1989) includes several references to McNaughton, but omits some of his major works. McNaughton was based in Forfar in 1836 when he tendered for various Lots on the Dundee and Arbroath; later that year he was awarded Lot 10 on the Arbroath and Forfar Railway. In 1839 he was awarded both Paisley to Millerston and the How Wood contract on the Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock & Ayr Railway. In the 1840s he was awarded the Polmont contract on the Edinburgh & Glasgow railway and the Haddington branch of Edinburgh to Berwick upon Tweed (Hajducki, 1994). In 1841 he resided at Craigs, Polmont; by 1851 he had relocated to Auchinleck, Ayrshire, where Euphans was born. There he tendered for work on the Glasgow, Dumfries & Carlisle Railway. He was contractor for the 13-arch viaduct near Cumnock standing 44 metres above the Lugar. Completed in 1850 and known as the Templand or Bank Viaduct, it was regarded by John Miller (1805-1883), who also designed the record-breaking Ballochmyle Viaduct, as his greatest design (Paxton & Shipway, 2007).

From "Ayr" McNaughton tendered for the Ayr and Smithstown section of the Ayrshire & Galloway Railway. In 1858 he was awarded the Loch Skerrow section of the Portpatrick Railway (Smith, 1969). In 1863 he continued to be identified as "from Ayr" when he tendered for Monktonhall Railway and, unsuccessfully, nearer his origins for the Montrose & Bervie Railway.

In 1868 McNaughton was awarded the £300 000 Glasgow & Kilmarnock Joint Railway from Barrhead up the Cowden valley and thence south via Stewarton. There its ten-arch Annick Water Viaduct merits mention in the Ayrshire "Pevsner" for its engineer George Cunningham and contractor James McNaughton of Ayr (Close & Riches, 2012). When the line was opened to passengers at Stewarton on 27 March 1871 *The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* reported that James Brown of Holybank, the senior

magistrate of the burgh, “presided over an excellent supper, supported right and left by James McNaughton, Esq., of Smithfield, contractor of the line and John Strain, Esq, the Resident Engineer (for Blyth & Cunningham). After the usual preliminary toasts the chairman observed that now passengers could travel direct from Stewarton to London and that at last the town was rescued from comparative obscurity.” There were 18 further toasts proposed by the burgh’s officers including “the engineers and contractors of the line, coupled with the health of Mr. McNaughton”. Bailie Barton spoke of Mr. Cunningham, consulting engineer, as “a gentleman who stood high in his profession. The resident engineer they all knew and it [was] him they had to thank for the taste displayed at the stations and if they went through the length and breadth of Scotland they would not on this matter find better taste displayed. The signals fitted up under his direction were the best — the system of signalling could not be surpassed. Referring to the contractor, Mr. McNaughton, he said that had it not been for the energy of that gentleman the line would not have been opened that day. Mr. McNaughton was also a gentleman willing to assist in every charitable matter. Since coming to Stewarton he had taken a deep interest in the town. A day school was kept up by his wife and daughter and they had shown a deep interest in the poor of the locality.”

Three years later, McNaughton’s daughter, Euphans Helen, married John Strain on 13 August 1874. In *The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* of 16 August 1874, it was announced, “At Standalane House, Stewarton, by the Rev. Thomas Underwood, brother-in-law of the bride, Irongray, Dumfries, John Strain, Esq., C.E., son of Hugh Strain, Esq., of Grahamshill, Airdrie, to Euphans Ellen [*sic*] Macnaughton [*sic*], youngest daughter of James Macnaughton, Esq., of Smithfield.” Sheila Hamilton believed that Euphan’s mother, Ellen Ferrier, was possibly related to Hugh Strain’s partner in an Airdrie firm of coalmasters, Ferrier & Strain. The Stewarton correspondent in the same issue of the newspaper wrote: “While we congratulate the couple upon the happy consummation, we regret the removal of the young lady from our midst. During the family’s residence amongst us ‘her life has been a redolancy of love and sweet benevolence’ towards the suffering, the infirm and the poor. May peace and happiness be the fruit of this union, is the earnest desire of all who are cognisant of her many acts of goodness. Decorations were profuse at Standalane House, the Cross, Railway Station and other places.”

In 1881 McNaughton was resident in “Roseburn, Ayr”, where he died 9 years later. There is the thought that McNaughton’s residence in Ayr may have influenced John and Euphans to transfer their principal residence from 14 Berkeley Terrace West, Glasgow, in 1883 to “Doonbrae, Ayr” (the exact locations of both “Roseburn” and “Doonbrae” have yet to be identified). In 1896 the Strain family’s main residence became Cassillis House, Maybole, as tenants of the Marquess of Ailsa. Their lease of the property continued through their son, Colonel Laurence Hugh Strain, OBE, DSC, KC, until 1952. In 1907 the property was commended to the notorious Henry Frick, Andrew Carnegie’s sometime partner and a principal belligerent in the 1892 Homestead Strike as being “one of the best fishing and shooting estates in Scotland.”

McNaughton’s daughter, Euphans Helen Strain, had one son and two daughters and she was listed in the earlier editions of *Who’s Who*. Euphans was an authoress with several books published in her lifetime, often set in places where either her father or her husband had had projects. All five of the Strain family travelled around the world by sea and rail in 1894. Euphans reported the trip in a series of articles published in *The Scotsman* after her return; her most memorable day was 25 April 1894 in Samoa, where they met Robert Louis Stevenson — aboard ship as they did not have enough time to visit his house. The elder daughter, Helen Mary Strain, married Kenneth Alfred Wolfe Barry; they had three sons and a daughter. Kenneth Barry was the second son of Sir John Wolfe Barry, President of The Institution of Civil Engineers, whose bridges included Tower Bridge and Connel Road-and-Rail Bridge as well as Grangemouth Docks, and was also a co-founder with John Strain of what became the British Standards Institution (McWilliam, 2001). The younger daughter, Euphans Hilary, married Harold, son of the widely regarded marine artist William I. Wyllie, RA, RE (Harris & Halsby, 1990).

Sources.

Ancestry: 2016 various searches

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Robert C. McWilliam,
13 March 2016.

SIHS “BURNS DOO,” 2016

There were five speakers at the “Burns Doo” at Beechwood Scout Hall, Stirling, on Saturday 23 January.

Murray Dickie spoke on a lottery-funded project to examine the tramways, harbours, and villages constructed to support the exploitation of the coal seams on the Clackmannan and Alloa estates during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Murray is one of the founders of the Forth Naturalist and Historian, an annual seminar run in Stirling University (probably my favourite day out). It was at one of these seminars devoted to the Stirlingshire coal fields that the author becomes aware of the SIHS.

The coal field inclines about six degrees to the west, and has a series of slip faults running at about 90 degrees to the inclination, giving rise to displacements of up to 240 feet. The consequent checkerboard of discontinuous seams and the limits of mine engineering at the time resulted in the need for multiple pits. Drainages were sunk at the deepest part and access at the most shallow: this latter to minimise the work of basket-laden women climbing up the shafts. All this conspired to require frequent closure of exhausted pits and opening of new ones and this was reflected in a dynamic of renewal and extension of tramways. Export from the area was from small ports on the rivers draining into the Forth. It proved necessary to floor the ports as, due to fine slits washed in by the tide; the flat-bottomed craft could have become stuck in the mud and overwhelmed by an incoming tide.

Emily Malcolm chose to guide us through an aerial representation of Glasgow produced in 1864 for the *Illustrated London News* by T. Salmon. These aerial or balloon views were popular at the time, giving a novel and exciting representation of familiar townscapes. There is a remarkable correlation between the isometric projection of the city plan and the balloon view. Representation of extant buildings is true and some fine lost industrial structures were shown from old photos to be similarly accurate. The Clyde is shown crowded with ships; an approximate count gives 100 sailing ships and 50-plus steam ships.

The view shows the old Caledonian railway station south of the river, prior to the opening of Glasgow Central in 1879. The main street facade is again highly accurate as is confirmed by an old photograph. The former, and now demolished, Randolph Elder engine works of 1858 to 1860 in Tradeston shows up particularly well, underlining the regrettable loss of this fine Egyptian-style building with its massive

built-up internal timber beams. An intriguing representation is of large wheel of unknown purpose under construction. It is about 50 feet diameter and may show the prefabrication of something to be reassembled on site.

Mark Watson was much involved in the successful application for World Heritage status for the Forth Bridge. He showed us just how much effort goes into convincing the awarding body of the worth of the application; simple self-evidence is not enough. Cantilever bridges throughout the world had to be analyzed and compared just to prove just how remarkable and special a structure it is. Only the bridge itself could be considered, and the spectacular surrounds that add so much to experience of the spectacle could not be taken into account. It was fascinating to see the many different solutions the design engineers had devised in putting together the cantilever, bridging and anchoring links to form a bridge. To gain world heritage status the object needs to be proved to be (*inter alia*) a work of genius, an illustration of technology at a stage of human history and an outstanding example of its type representing a significant stage of history. The Forth Bridge was much larger than the other two contenders — the Vizcaya Transporter Bridge in Bilbao, Spain, and a bridge (with an unpronounceable name!) in former Yugoslavia. The work of Eric Watt, a former SIHS treasurer, was also involved in putting forward the application.

Allan Pollock presented a fascinating little vignette on the *U 60* (not an *Unterseeboot* of the SMS or its immediate successor) but the last extant working barge on the Union Canal. A photo of 1950 showed the same barge still in use. It now lies derelict and abandoned in a flooded dry dock near to the Avon Gorge viaduct. The casting for the drain pump is still recognisable. However, this relict is flooded and embowered in vegetation. Its current state seems rather a pity considering all the celebration of the canal encapsulated in the Falkirk Wheel and the rearing fantasy of the Kelpies, Considering just how much has been spent on those, it is to say the least regrettable that this genuine relic should moulder forlorn and neglected. [*Unfortunately corrosion has eaten so much away that lifting it out intact without something like the paraphernalia used to recover Henry VIII's Mary Rose from the Solent would be impossible. The site is also virtually inaccessible for large machinery.* — Ed. AMJ]

Finally Tony Jervis regaled us to a numinous series of slides of rail systems in and about Edinburgh he had taken some time back; they were remarkable in addition to their quality as a record for having a rather a magical golden sepia glow. We were regaled with views of the complexity of lines running into and out of Waverley station; not much had changed, though the goods yard has been lost. The more erudite of the members had an interesting time identifying features round the former Abbeyhill Station, the signalling at Lochend Junction, and the sidings leading to, *inter alia*, Miller's Foundry. There were also fine representations of the wagon tip unloading bay to feed coal to the power station at Kings Road, Portobello, all now demolished.

The day concluded with the very fine buffet of excellent quality, but any of you who have attended this event before will have pleasurable memories of the attendant catering, courtesy of Marion, widow of the late Dave Bates.

Andrew Young.

LEITH

Trinity House in Leith is celebrating its first 200 years on Saturday 11 June 2016. SIHS visited it a couple of years ago and a fascinating place it was. They will have fun craft activities, family trails and object handling sessions. Visitors can also see their new video about the history of Trinity House and view a fantastic temporary exhibition exploring 200 years of Trinity House and its place in Leith. Meet and interact with costumed passengers from the 1920s who have just landed in Leith on board the *Royal Fusilier!* Free entry. Please call Trinity House direct on 0131 554 3289 for more information.

In the docks at the same time will be the “Dazzle Ship”, whose World War I camouflage would put psychedelic hippy flower power warriors to shame. See it to believe it!