



A CONTINUING HISTORY OF GRANGEMOUTH SWIMMING CLUB

Part 1

Grangemouth – Swimming – A Club 1924 -1949

Grangemouth Amateur Swimming Club was formed on Monday 15th September 1924. So, on the 15th September 2019 we will be 95 years old with our centenary on 15th September 2024, so our 100th year will commence on 15th September 2023.

Falkirk Herald - Saturday 20th September 1924

“SWIMMING CLUB. —A meeting of lady and gentlemen swimmers was held in the Lesser Town Hall on Monday evening. Councillor Richard Stanners presided, and after an explanation of the object of the meeting it was unanimously decided to form a club, to be named the Grangemouth Swimming Club. The following office-bearers were elected;— Presidents, Councillors Stanners and Wilkinson; vice-president, John Finlayson; secretary, Mr Ebenezer Stein, Paris Street; treasurer, Miss Fotheringham; with a committee of eight members. It was remitted to the committee to frame the rules and constitution, with bye-laws, and submit same for approval at a future meeting of the club. It was unanimously decided to apply for affiliation to the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association.”

A scanned newspaper clipping from the Falkirk Herald, dated Saturday 20th September 1924. The text is a reproduction of the article mentioned in the previous block, detailing the formation of the Grangemouth Swimming Club. The clipping is set against a light brown background.

SWIMMING CLUB.—A meeting of lady and gentlemen swimmers was held in the Lesser Town Hall on Monday evening. Councillor Richard Stanners presided, and after an explanation of the object of the meeting it was unanimously decided to form a club, to be named the Grangemouth Swimming Club. The following office-bearers were elected:— Presidents, Councillors Stanners and Wilkinson; vice-president, Mr John Finlayson; secretary, Mr Ebenezer Stein, Paris Street; treasurer, Miss Fotheringham; with a committee of eight members. It was remitted to the committee to frame the rules and constitution, with bye-laws, and submit same for approval at a future meeting of the club. It was unanimously decided to apply for affiliation to the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association.

The Falkirk Herald went on to say;

GRANGEMOUTH

Now we're on the map! The natural consequence having a swimming pond is to have a swimming club, and Grangemouth Swimming Club has been actual fact since Monday evening. A good start is being made, thirty-four names having already been handed in. It is a bit chilly now' for open-air aquatic exercise, and only the more intrepid curtail their slumbers to impersonate "September morn." Three bursts in the duplicating pipe is a rather unfortunate record and has led to the total absence of Water on several days, including the favourite bathing morning—Sunday."

Just to remind us why we learn to swim a typical report in the Aberdeen Press and Journal - Thursday 01 November 1906.

TWO MEN DROWNED IN GRANGEMOUTH

A lamentable accident occurred Grangemouth docks yesterday morning, whereby two men were drowned and third narrowly escaped. All were employees the Grangemouth and Greenock Dockyard Company, and were proceeding in punt from Carron Dock to the Grange Dock under tow of the lighter Hero. After passing through the West Cut leading to the channel the Grange Dock, the punt suddenly dipped and the three men were washed into the water. Before assistance could got two of the men—Archibald Strang, Engineer Kerse Road, Grangemouth, and William Henry, apprentice engineer, Bainsford, were drowned. The third man, Edward Harrower, apprentice engineer, Dundas Street, Grangemouth, was able swim ashore.

But it was the opening of the Pond in Zetland Park on the 28th June 1924 that enabled a Club to be formed.

Grangemouth Swimming Pool



When opened in July 1924 the pool was 150ft by 45ft with a depth of 6ft at one end and 3ft at the other. It was edged by a raised kerb and surrounded by a fence, within which were steps and handrails to assist the swimmers. Dressing rooms were provided in the form of disused railway vans.

The complex was upgraded in the 1930s and the pool was surrounded by single storey rooms along three sides and an enclosing wall on the south. Facing the pool these rooms were for changing, with offices in the corners. The flat roof above them served as a balcony, having a brick parapet wall to the outer side and concrete post and tubular rails inwards. The finish was in good engineering brick with harled panels. On the north side of the pool two steel girder flights of steps met at a central diving platform on a level with the balcony, to which they also provided access. The parapet rose to a shallow gablet behind the diving platform and supported a flagstaff. Further steps in its height occurred at the corners to produce turret-like features. The balcony floor extended over open brick-pillared shelters inset into the outside of the building between the offices. The main entrance was in the centre of the north facade and had a lofty brick arch. Narrow horizontal slit windows served the changing rooms, with larger windows for the offices.



Zetland Swimming Pool from the Orchard

In October 1971 a new indoor swimming pool was completed on the other side of the Grange Burn and a year later the old pool was demolished.

Geoff Bailey 2016 Falkirk Local History Society

The first swimmer, recorded in January 1926, was Thomas Leyden.

LIFE-SAVING CERTIFICATE.

Thomas Leyden, schoolboy, 177 Lumley Street, has qualified for the elementary certificate issued by the Royal Life Saving Society. Glasgow Corporation Baths Committee has sent him a letter of congratulation and a season ticket for Glasgow Swimming Baths, "with a view encouraging citizens to become proficient the art of swimming and life-saving." Thomas goes to school in Glasgow and is a member of Grangemouth Swimming Club."

From the outset Tuesday night was Club night. Again in 1926 it is recorded that the Secretary of Grangemouth Swimming Club asked for an extension of the privilege accorded last year of having Tuesday nights from 7 till 8.30 set aside for club practice. Councillor Crookston said they were very much indebted the Swimming Club, and the arrangement had previously worked satisfactorily. It was agreed to grant the request.

Life saving was already recognised as a vital skill and the Clubs association with Life Saving started and continues today with many swimmers working as Lifeguards.

LIFE-SAVING AT SWIMMING POND.

A demonstration in the art of life-saving attracted large crowd to the Swimming Pond on Tuesday night. Mr A. M'Millan, secretary, Life-Saving Association, Glasgow, gave a display of ornamental swimming, as well as showing how to rescue an exhausted person in the water, a desperate person, a struggling and quiet person, clearly exhibiting the different holds and methods. A young member of Grangemouth Swimming Club, Billy Ferguson, efficiently acted the drowning patient. M'Millan's actions were followed with the closest attention by the members of the club and others, and his exhibition swimming was very clever and entertaining. showed a "frog swim" and a "duck swim", imitated the actions of porpoises at play and seals at play as well the motions of a steamer's paddle and even swam head downwards. At the close M'Millan was most cordially thanked for his visit.

The Club Championships commenced in 1925 and in its second year Mr David Hain, jun., the elder son of ex- County Councillor David Hain, Fort-Knowe, "is distinguishing himself at aquatic sports. For the second year in succession, he has carried off the Paterson Cup and gold medal of the Grangemouth Swimming Club, the chief prizes offered in the club's 50 yards handicap race for youths under 18. Mr Ham only took tip swimming when the club was formed two years ago."

In 1927 the Falkirk Herald reported;

SWIMMING

For some time now, the local association has been endeavouring to secure facilities which would enable all troops to have access to swimming baths, and we are at present in communication with the Grangemouth Swimming Club. It is the ambition of the association to see all troops participating in this scheme, and endeavour will be made to arrange for Scout night or something approaching that, when Scouts from all over the district will meet at the baths, and instruction be given in this very necessary and truly Scouting accomplishment. The scheme is as yet only in embryo, but it would assist greatly if troops would give us an idea of the support they would be prepared to give in the matter. It was suggested that we might be able to arrange for each troop to take out a, number of transferable season tickets the baths, at cost not exceeding 2s 6d each per annum. Scoutmasters are asked consider the matter, and to send note of the number of such tickets their respective troops would be prepared to take up the Hon. Secretary, A. L. Tomison, C.A., 3 Melville Street, Falkirk, before the 31st inst."

The Life-saving Classes started on Wednesday 30 March 1927. "A class of those interested in life-saving has been formed in connection with Grangemouth Swimming Club. meeting was held on Wednesday evening in the Lesser Town Hall, and it was resolved engage in "Land" practice, in preparation for the opening of the Swimming Pond in the Park. Both young men and women have enrolled."

Open water swimming was also already being proposed and also the Club's connection with School swimming began. A public meeting was held in the Burgh Court Hall, and a large committee formed, with Mr James Rae as convener, for the purpose of making arrangements for - swimming gala in the Basin. A very special attractive programme is promised. We should be good at that sort of thing. Crossing the street in some of those showers is the very same sensation as diving. The beautiful solid' silver cups presented to Grangemouth Swimming Club for competition amongst school boys

and school girls, have been displayed in Gladstone's window this week. The girls' trophy bears the inscription, "The Avonlea Trophy" and on the base, "Presented by D A Tait, Avonlea, Grangemouth" and the boys' trophy is inscribed, "The Wilson Brown Trophy" Presented by Mrs Tait, Avonlea, Grangemouth.

1927 was a busy year. THE FALKIRK HERALD reported "On WEDNESDAY, JULY 1927,

SWIMMING CARNIVAL.

Aquatic Sports at Grangemouth Canal Basin. Aquatic sports were held on Saturday afternoon the Canal Basin, Grangemouth, in aid of the Church of Scotland Aged People's Home at Powfoulis House. The effort was great success; it was estimated that about 4000 people were present. The weather was very favourable, and ample seating accommodation was provided for the public round the Canal Basin, while the platform party were seated on barge at one end, and the interior of another barge provided dressing-room space for the competitors. There were numbers of entrants for the various events, and the greasy pole and mounting the barrels created greatest amusement. The proceedings were opened by Bailie Hartley, who explained the origin and purpose Powfoulis House and the need for support and aid for the sake of the respected old people. Twenty-five or thirty years ago he said, the Church of Scotland had not realised its responsibility in connection with the social and moral welfare of the great mass of the people in this country. In 1904, however, the Church, with the approval of the General Assembly, instituted a Social Work Committee. This committee since then had established rescue homes for girls, labour homes for destitute men, training homes for youths, and homes for homeless lads, but, to his mind, the acquisition of Powfoulis House from the Dawson Trustees for aged people was the keystone in the great arch of social amelioration which the committee had built up during the last twenty-three years. In providing a house of rest for the aged and indigent people they had accomplished a scheme worthy of commendation by all Christian people. Sometime ago a very enthusiastic committee of gentlemen in the old and new town of Grangemouth decided to hold aquatic sports for the purpose of providing funds to procure for the residents of Powfoulis House few creature comforts, and that day they were" taking part in a function which he sincerely hoped would be a huge financial success. That night all those aged residents in Powfoulis House, who had had their days of joy and days of disappointment, would thank them very sincerely for their unrestricted efforts to provide them with a few more comforts in order that they might spend the evening of their days in peace and happiness. A great acquisition to the programme were the contributions from Alloa Swimming Baths Club. Mr Peter Starker (who was second in the Scottish Diving Championship), Mr W. P. Belly and Mr D. M'Lennan gave exhibitions of swimming and diving which interested the onlookers to a great degree. They displayed the low, graceful dive, high dive, shallow dive, upstart dive, screw dive, drunk man's dive, jack knife, dead man's dive, back somersault, back dive, double dive, etc., and a very clever and original dive, standing-on-hands. Miss Evelyn Boocock, Miss Stirling, and Miss Jean Harris were also present, with the Alloa lady instructress, Miss Rita Paterson, and gave exhibitions of ornamental swimming and diving. They formed in the water a triangle, St Andrew's Cross, and other devices with striking effect and showed the old and new style of side stroke, breast stroke, overarm stroke, back stroke, dorsal crawl, sculling, cycling," etc. The ladies' fine display evoked the warmest applause from the spectators, and the gentlemen -were also cordially thanked. Another very attractive feature was the exhibition dancing, on a punt in the middle of the basin, by Mrs Rae and party from Falkirk. Mrs Rae skirt dances, Dutch and Irish folk dances, and her little companions Highland dances in a very graceful manner. Grange Thistle Pipe Band added considerably to the liveliness of the occasion. The winners of the various competitive events were:— 25 yards (boys)—1, R. M'Laren; 2, J. Mudie. 50 yards (youths)—1, R. Allan; 2, H. Ballantyne. 100 yards (open)—1, C. Mudge (Channel Islands); 2, Thos. Foy (Bo'ness). 300 yards (confined) —1, A. Paisley; 2, H. M'Cormack; 3, J. Lawless. Graceful diving—1, J. Penman; 2, T. Nicol; 3, T. Drummond. Mounting the barrel —1, J.

Allan; 2, T. Foy; 3, Linton Binnie. Greasy pole—1, Linton Binnie; 2, D. Drummond; 3, J. Penman. The prizes were presented to the successful competitors at the close by Mrs Hartley. Mr Peter Stalker kindly acted as judge of the diving, and the hard-working committee, who are to be congratulated on the success of their efforts, were:—Dean of Guild Stanners, chairman: Mr D. Drummond, secretary ; Mr W. J. M'Kay, treasurer; and Messrs J. Rae, J. Morris, J. Querrie, J. Grassom, D. Nmol, G. Straiton. G. Dick. J. Dick, VV. Aird, J. Penman, C. Leslie. They were ably assisted by a deputation from Grangemouth Swimming Club, which included Miss Gilmour, Messrs Gow, Croy, and Kemp.

1928 Seasons opening picture



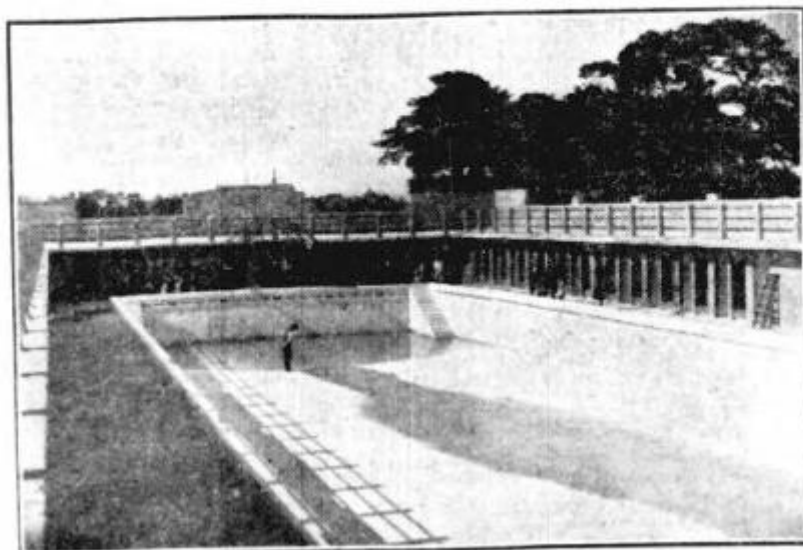
By the 1930's fashions were already changing :-



In 1932 the Pond opened on the 4th June

GRANGEMOUTH'S SWIMMING POND.

Bathing Cubicles to be Opened This Afternoon.



View of Swimming Pond, with surrounding cubicles and Balcony.

One of the most up-to-date swimming enclosures in Stirlingshire will be officially inaugurated in Grangemouth Public Park this (Saturday) afternoon, when Judge Crookston will start the swimming season by opening the new cubicles which have been built round the pond.

For a long time Grangemouth bathers were provided with disused railway carriages as dressing rooms, but the upkeep of these carriages was becoming too heavy, and consequently the Town Council decided to build new brick cubicles. This scheme has now been completed, and the handsome erection designed by Mr J. C. Wallace, the borough engineer, and his staff is ready for the public. The pond itself, which measures 150 feet by 45 feet, was constructed in 1924, at a cost of £1350, and as the new scheme will cost approximately £2850, the total cost of providing swimming facilities for the town will amount to over £4000. The Town Council is confident, however, that the enterprise they have shown will be rewarded.

The pond has been white cement glazed, and this provides a fine effect. The accommodation provided in the new scheme consists of 54 single cubicles, 27 being set apart for females, and the other 27 for males. There are also common dressing-rooms for 150 boys, and similar common dressing-rooms for girls. The male accommodation is situated on the west side of the pond, with the female accommodation on the east side. The accommodation is completed

with lavatories, which house six down-sprays.

CAFE AND BALCONY.

The scheme also provides a cafe for the sale of refreshments to park frequenters and bathers; a balcony, which will seat approximately 800 spectators; and a permanent set of diving boards fitted to the stair leading to the balcony. At the outside of the building, to the north, east, and west, weather shelters are situated.

The walls of the building are constructed in Shotts grey brick on a reinforced concrete foundation, and roofed with reinforced concrete slab, which is surmounted with a parapet wall, four corner eaves, and three centre pediments. The outside elevations are decorated with a terra cotta brick lens across, with yellow pea gravel dashed roughcast above, and in order to obtain a bold effect the outside of the parapet wall is finished in a white flint dashed roughcast.

Situated to the west of the "Orchard," the building, while imposing and modern in its structure, lends a tone of dignity to the park. The scheme is definitely a progressive one in this age of physical culture, and the new enclosure should prove extremely popular with the swimmers in the town.

After the opening ceremony this afternoon a swimming gala will be held, and there will be races for both sexes of all ages. The appearance of such a noted swimmer as W. E. Barnes, of Portobello A.S.C., supported by D. C. Kemp and J. W. Ames of the same club, should add greatly to the attractions already provided.

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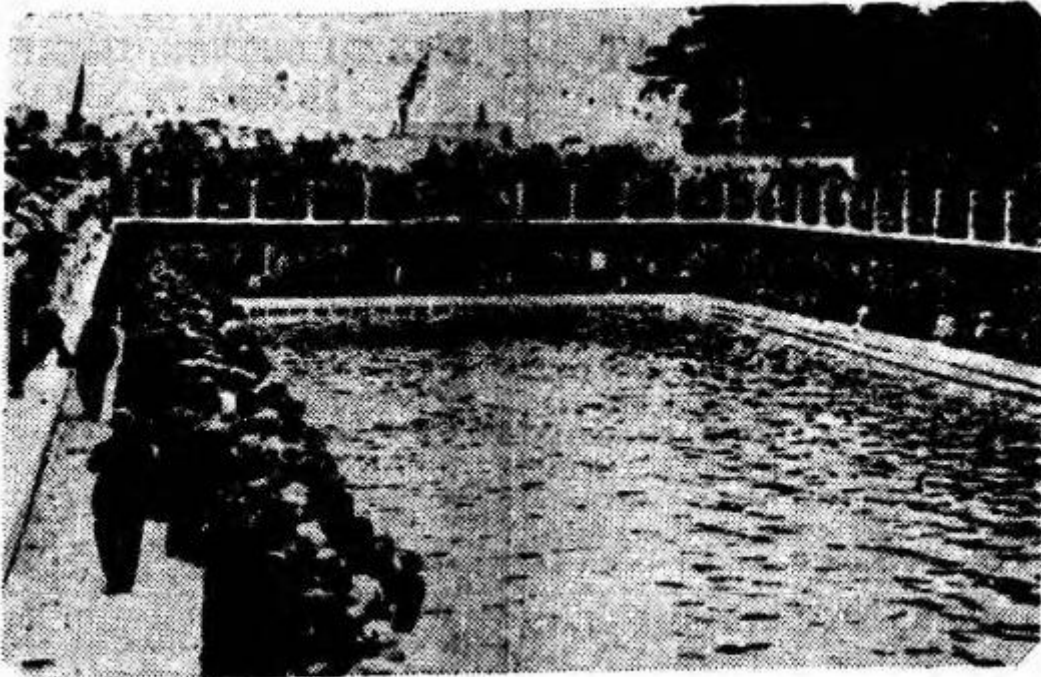
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GRANGEMOUTH POND IMPROVEMENT



A general view of the Grangemouth Swimming Pond on Saturday, with new brick enclosure, when it was officially opened by Judge Crookston, the Parks Convener.

On Saturday 11 June 1932, it was reported in the Edinburgh Evening news.

“Changed Days Strictly speaking, the pool not entirely new, the site having been occupied somewhat primitive structure, dating from 1924. Since that date old railway coaches did duty dressing-boxes, but this makeshift, combined with the unsatisfactory bottoming used for the pool, only emphasised the necessity for something more comfortable. A sum of nearly £3000 has been spent in converting the makeshift pool, and all who see the result the Council's labours are likely to agree that it was money well spent. The Council have been fortunate in securing the services Mr John Finlayson pond master, for an enthusiastic swimmer, with some 40 years experience behind him. A stalwart of the Grangemouth Swimming Club, which now affiliated to the Western Counties Amateur Swimming Association, Mr Finlayson recalls the days—not long ago—when, far from providing them with facilities, the Corporation sent the local police upon the track of swimmer who dared to take a dip the docks or in the chilly waters of the nearby burns. For their long days the wilderness, however, the Grangemouth swimmers are being richly compensated.”

Not everything about Grangemouth swimming pond was about athleticism and we would not write articles like this today, unfortunately, in these days of political correctness and anti-sexism, but humour still transcends the ages for most!

GRANGEMOUTH.

Go to Denny!

Quite frequently have we been entreated and cajoled to remove ourselves to that spot, notorious for its bank hold-ups and Highland Games, but this is the first occasion on which we have really gone.

Perhaps that is saying too much. We did not really go in the flesh but in the spirit. A fortnight ago when big lusty he-men were enjoying themselves with gusto tossing weights, cabers, and hammers, we could not help but transport ourselves in spirit to Denny. In flesh we were at the new swimming pond in the Public Park at Grangemouth.

Perhaps the allusion to Denny Highland Games will not now be so obscure, for though they may be odious at all times, comparisons could not but come rushing to one's mind. At Denny there were huge muscular men doing deeds of great strength, and in Grangemouth swimming pond there were also muscular men, but there were also those who were not so muscular.

There were fat men, thin men, short men, tall men, and practically every specimen of manhood and, of course, there were also the ladies. Somehow or other the ladies are like the poor, perhaps it is because we have them always hanging around. We feel there is no need to detail the various kinds of ladies there were, for that would soon develop into a fashion talk. The costumes they sported were weird, wonderful, and witty. Brevity . . . you know.

It is the men we wish to talk about. Some of them came smilingly out of their cubicles, looking for all the world like suntanned Adonises. They could afford to look the spectators in the face and smile. Having that athletic figure, they could well permit themselves to sit on the side of the pond and chat to the ladies, and the ladies were well pleased to be seen chatting to an Adonis—who wouldn't?

Then came the others. The fat men ambled amiably out of their cubicles, and with that typical good-nature did not mind much what the spectators said. It was the others we felt sorry for. **They were those men who were not blessed with an athletic**

or even portly figure. Out they came slinking, their long arms wrapped round their bodies and their knobby knees bent. The walk from the cubicles to the side of the pond must have been agony for them.

Those are the men who deserve the medals. In spite of any criticisms that may be levelled at their figures, they go on bathing, determined that by the time their holidays come round they will be able to go to the seaside confident in their ability to enter the water and strike out for the neighbouring country. Who knows but what some of them may even yet break all records for the Channel crossing? Yes, who knows? We don't.

In July 1933

SWIMMING SURPRISES

Scottish Inter-District Contest in Grangemouth Pond TWO CHAMPIONS BEATEN

Grangemouth's open-air swimming pool in the Earls Park was on Saturday afternoon the setting for one of the premier Scottish swimming events, the third annual inter district speed contest. This important fixture had been brought to Grangemouth in an effort create still further interest in swimming so far as Stirlingshire is concerned. Assisting the Olympic Training Uee of the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association was the Grangemouth Amateur Swimming Club, a body which revealed considerable initiative and enterprise in being bold enough to request the organisers to stage this contest at the town's new open air pond. In many ways the event was a pronounced success. Arrangements of a most satisfactory sort had been made by the local club to permit of the presentation of ten races, bringing together the elite of the Scottish swimming world, being decided under the best possible conditions for a gala which, from the aspect of the galaxy of talent competing, was probably unrivalled In Scotland, the attendance, to say the least, was frankly disappointing. The response of the new East Stirlingshire swimming public to the event was not in the least degree encouraging. Falkirk's quota of spectators was of most meagre nature while counter-attractions in Grangemouth were responsible for a depleted number of spectators being drawn from the neighbourhood of the Port. The actual attendance would be in the region of 1000 persons a poor turnout having regard to the bumper attraction of a thrilling inter-district speed contest which made the event into a thoroughly representative national gathering. As it was, those who supported the Grangemouth Club witnessed splendid swimming and saw the Scottish champions in action. Furthermore, the contest was of a most interesting nature, as there were some altogether sensational turn-ups in the various events, which resulted in the dethronement two notable Scottish swimmers

PROVOST AND VALUE OF SWIMMING

Provost Gloag presided over the proceedings he was supported by Mr R. B. Peddie of the Grangemouth Club, and Judge G Crookston.

Mr Peddie introducing the Provost, spoke of the pleasure it gave the Grangemouth Club to be associated with the staging of such an ambitious event in Scottish Swimming. They were happy to have competing in the pond that day a selection of the finest national swimmers. In welcoming the competitors, they hoped that the arrangements made for their comfort would be to their complete satisfaction.

Provost Gloag then addressed the gathering. He referred to the value of swimming as a healthy exercise and the pleasure it gave him as the Provost of Grangemouth to welcome such a galaxy of Scottish swimming talent to the open-air pond that afternoon. The Provost made suitable mention that Grangemouth led the way so far as ponds of this description were concerned. He thought it very fitting that in their town inhabitants of which nearly all gained their livelihood on the water, should be trained, or at least have the opportunity to be trained as swimmers, so that should occasion arise they could not only save themselves but also the lives of other people who might happen to be in difficulties in water. (Applause.)

O the call of Judge Crookston, the Provost was awarded a most cordial vote of thanks.

The general arrangements reflected great credit on the organising abilities of Mr J. Gow secretary of the Grangemouth Swimming Club and his committee. The various events were carried through exactly to timetable and the S.A.S.A. officials in attendance expressed themselves being satisfied with the arrangements.

GLASGOW GIRL'S TRIUMPH

(hard to decipher!)

The standard of swimming throughout had probably never been equalled from aspect of excitement in the two contests which have previously been held. An expert summing up of the various events will be given by the "Falkirk Herald" swimming authority "Six Beat" in his customary weekly notes on Saturday. Mean time it may be mentioned that the defeat of "Willie Burns" the Glasgow policeman and the Sottish free style champion, by I D Irving of the Warrender Club, Edinburgh was a result that confounded the majority of the experts. It was nothing of a surprise however, when compared with the triumph of a fourteen-year-old Glasgow Janette Allen, of the Southside in one of the most thrilling witnessed in Scottish competitive event, defeated Miss Gladys the reigning women's champion. Willie Francis, tot Olympic representative for the cvp fie iified the back nJhhp,, t; while a Motherwell woman 1. h, Hf-o , Miss C. Bowman won the 400 fully twenty-five yards, nts Placings the Western reproeof out easy winners, and a C fiian ,tfic contest was the excellent the Midlands team. The final it . the West lead the East 13 St at an interval by Miss ?ti, 'ivf, y ei iaon and Miss Lily Lamont, PL . trj; w delighted onlookers with l (i, Jl , swimming, and a splendid wOHs. .pf plate swimming by Mr Hugh to le popular Technical School of principal of the Grange %('■ were enjoyable incil,sh T,,^ of a singularly successful swimming event.

PLACINGS

ulOq 1,8 :^ Ure given the results of the various Ujj. 8 free style—Women —1, Miss M. if e nfrew (West); 2, Miss M. , ,FortobeUo (East); 3, Miss E. he Dundee (Midlands). Led Se Btfl rt, to win by four yards. Time, NfJ,,, free style—Men—1, N. D. Irving, Edinburgh (East); 2, W. Burns, 'fil ° ' ce (West); 3, G. S. Reynolds, fundee (Midlands). Won by Time, 60 1-5 secs. 150 yards back stroke—Women— 1, Miss J. M'Vey, Warrender, Edinburgh (East); 2, Miss J. White, Belmont, Dundee (Midlands). Miss M. M'Laren, Victoria Baths (West), was disqualified from second place for making a faulty turn. Won by a touch. Time, 2 mins. 2-5 secs. 150 yards back stroke —Men—1, W. Francis, Renfrew (West); 2, A. Gray, Warrender, Edinburgh (East); 3, D. Robertson, Arnhall, Dundee (Midlands). Won easily by ten yards. Time, 1 min. 58 2-5 secs. 400 yards free style—Women—1, Miss C. Bowman, Motherwell Ladies (West); 2, Miss A. S. Nairn, Whitehall, Dundee; 3, Miss F. Hogg, Grove S.C., Edinburgh (East). Won by twenty-five yards. Time, 5 mins. 53 secs. '400 yards free style—Men—1, M. Chassels, Pollokshields (West); 2, R. Hunt, Belmont, Dundee (Midlands); 3, J. R. Todd, Portobello (East). Won by forty yards. Time, 5 mins, 12 secs. 200 yards breast stroke —Women —1, Miss J. Allan, South-Side, Glasgow (West); 2, Miss G. Howard, Warrender, Edinburgh (East); 3, Miss M. Ferguson, Whitehall, Dundee (Midlands). Won by touch. Time, 3 mins. 19 2-5 secs. 200 yards breast stroke —Men —1, H. Smith, Glasgow Police (West); 2, T. Rae, Whitehall, Dundee (Midlands); 3, C. Jones, Rosebery, Edinburgh (East). Won by twenty yards. Time, 2 mins. 53 4-5 secs. Team' race (100 yards)— Women—1, West (Misses M'Laren, Logan, J. Allan, and Bowman); 2, Midlands (Misses White, Cooper, Ferguson, A. S. Nairn). East team disqualified. Won easily. Team race (100 yards)— Men—1, West (Messrs Francis, Burns, Smith, and Chassels); 2, East (Messrs Gray, Irving, Jones, Todd); 3, Midlands (Messrs D. Robertson, Reynolds, Rae, Hunt). Points placings—West, 32 points; East, 19 points; Midlands, 18 points. (Pictures on back page.)

WINNING TEAM AT GRANGEMOUTH GALA



The Glasgow West Ladies' team, who won the inter-team race at the Grangemouth Swimming Gala on Saturday.

"FOLLOW THE LEADER"



Diving sport in Union Canal at Camelon, still popular as swimming pond.

The Pond opened again in 1936 and the Falkirk herald reported;

IN FULL SWING AGAIN



Bathing belles at Grangemouth Swimming Pond, opened for the season last week.

Few times are recorded but we know on Friday 30th October 1936, Harry Ballantine, Grangemouth Swimming Club, was awarded replica an Olympic badge at Bathgate last Friday evening when he competed in the Olympic Badge Test over metres. His time for the distance was 5, minutes 27 seconds. Ballantine is native of Bo'ness, his father, Mr J. B. Ballantine, being the well-known Boness iron founder. Before taking up swimming, Ballantine showed great promise as a runner but he found he could not combine the two sports.

In the Linlithgowshire Gazette on Friday 12 February 1937, it was reported;

LOCAL SWIMMER TO COMPETE AT RENFREW.

Two well-known young Scottish swimmers will-oppose Willie Burns, the West Scotland crack swimmer, at a trial held under the auspices of the Scottish Olympic Training Committee Renfrew Baths on Saturday, 20th February. They are, Henry Ballantine, Roman House, Bo'ness, captain of the Grangemouth Swimming Club, and Jim Morrow. St. Andrews, the champion swimmer the Step Rock Club. The trial will be over distance of 400 metres, and should they produce first-class form they will be included amongst the Scottish candidates for Olympic honours. Mr Ballantine, who has already gained badge for an excellent performance in trial held the committee last year, is of a similar age to the St. Andrews swimmer, and should- prove be good match for him.

On the 17th July 1937 there was a report for GRANGEMOUTH SWIMMING CLUB in the Falkirk Herald;

Successful Gala in Public Park Pond on Tuesday night (13th July) the Grangemouth Swimming Club held a most successful gala at the pond in the Public Park, when there was an attendance of about 800 spectators, who thoroughly enjoyed the various encounters. For the Paterson Cup, T. Drummond again proved a worthy winner for the third time, while H. C. Ballantine held the premier place for possession of the Byng Boys' Cup for the fourth time. The Misses Baikie, Falkirk (members of the local club), gave a number of exhibition items including the tandem breast stroke, side, front and back crawls, mixed tandems, porpoises, propelling, sculling, oyster, tug and liner, and rolling home. Mr Millar Ritchie, Renfrew, also gave a splendid display of one length breast stroke, the crawl, and butterfly breast stroke. A comical sketch was given by Messrs Gibb and Sinclair, Falkirk, and created great merriment. The pond master, Mr Finlayson, saw to the comfort of the swimmers by having a well-filled boiler of hot water for the sprays, and the water in the pond was at degrees, while the weather conditions were mild, and only a slight shower of rain fell about the time of commencement of the gala. At the close, Mrs Mitchell, Marshall Street, gracefully presented the prizes. The following are the results in the various events: Wilson Brown Cup—Winners of three heats—T. Sime, A. Bell and J. Ritchie. Final—1, J. Ritchie; 2, T. Synie. Avonlea Cup Winners in heats M. Clark and M. Sneddon; Ann Pirie and Annie Kelly. Final—1, Annie Kelly; 2, Ann * Byng Boys' Cup—1, H. Ballantine; 2, T. Finlayson. Paterson Cup—1, T. Drummond; 2, J. Ladies' team race (breast stroke) 1, A. M. Woods, J. Jack and N. Robertson; 2, S. N. Chalmers. N. Baikie and J. Morrell. Girls' team race (handicap) Jenkins, A. Kelly. M. Clark, and I. Laird; 2, E. Adamson, R. Strachan. M. Hughes and M. Sneddon, Boys team race (Dundas School) 1, J. Munro, T. M'Kendrick and J. Ritchie; 2, (i. Charleston, A. Sime and A. Young. Mixed medley team race (seniors and juniors)—, Misses J. Clark and J. Baikie, and Messrs A. Campbell and T. Finlayson; 2 Miss J. Wheeler and A. Pirie, and Messrs A. Bell and A. Young. Balloon novelty race (ladies) — Winner— Miss N. Charleston. Polo match—Whites beat the Blues by 3 goals to 1. The various officials were: —Handicap- J. Brough and H. C. Ballantine: starters, Messrs H. C. Ballantine and J. Mudie; judges—Messrs John Finlayson and John Mac Donald; referee for polo.

On 24th August 1937 there was reported;

GRANGEMOUTH GALA

Large Attendance at Scottish- English Swimming Contest LOCAL CLUBS DEFEATED A gala of unusual interest was held in the Grangemouth Swimming Pond on Tuesday evening. Under the auspices of the Grangemouth and Falkirk Amateur Swimming Clubs, an international team contest was staged against a team from the Shiverers Club, of Brighton and Hove. The contestants were all juniors, and they put up good show for the benefit of the large attendance of spectators present. The weather was very fine, and the gala, from every point of view, was a distinct. The visiting club carried off the honours of the evening easily winning the contest by seven events to three. All the events were keenly contested, but the Shiverers proved themselves to be superior to the combined teams of the Falkirk and Grangemouth clubs. The surprise of the evening was provided when Irene Hendry, the Scottish breast stroke champion, was defeated by M. Payne, of the Shiverers. the Sussex breast stroke champion. In this connection it should be stated in fairness that the president of the Shiverers sportingly offered an explanation. The Shiverers, he said, acknowledged Miss Hendry the superior swimmer on her times, which were far ahead of her opponents. Miss Hendry was therefore requested to make the swim more of exhibition, which she did. Miss Payne, however, put up a splendid performance and did the distance in four seconds less than she had ever done before to win from Miss Hendry by the merest fraction of second. GLASGOW POLICE WIN An interesting event on the card was the Banks Trophy contest, in which

three Scottish clubs were entered. The Glasgow Police had no difficulty carrying off the honour and were presented with the trophy by Mrs R. Bruce Peddie. In the course of the evening Sergt. W. Burns, of the Glasgow Police, the famous Scottish international swimmer, gave an exhibition of the various styles of swimming. Sergt. Burns is the holder of the Scottish 100 yards free-style championship and has held almost every free-style championship from short to long distance. On Saturday last he was competing in London with Continental cracks and received fifth place. The gala was held in conjunction with the Olympic Swimming and Training Committee, and there were many officials of that body and of the Scottish Swimming Association present. Mr David Russell, W.C.A.S.A.. was the starter; R K. Absolom, president of the S.A.S.A.. the referee; G. Morton. South Side, and D. A. Inglis, Govanhill, judges R. Cunningham. secretary of the S.A.S.A., and A. M'Kenzie, Paisley A.S.C., timekeepers. The gala conveners were Miss M. K. Fotheringham and Mr H. C. Ballantine. Bailie R. Bruce Peddie occupied the chair, and was supported by Bailie Murray and Judge Hartley, Bailie Peddie. in opening the gala, said that on behalf of the Grangemouth Swimming Club he had to express pleasure at seeing such large turnout of spectators. On behalf of the people of Grangemouth generally, and the swimming clubs of Falkirk and Grangemouth, he desired to extend very hearty welcome to the Shiverers Club of Brighton and Hove. They came to Grangemouth with a very high reputation. Since 1931 they had been holders of the Sussex County Championship for boys and girls, and on numerous occasions had held the Southern Counties' championship. He hoped that an interesting evening would be spent and that the various events would be contested in a spirited manner. RESULTS The results were:— 50 3 aids girls' back stroke —A. Edmeads, Shiverers (Sussex back-stroke champion); 2. P. Patching. Shiverers; 3, M. Niven, Falkirk. 50 yards boys' back stroke —1, F. R. Thomerson, Shiverers (Sussex backstroke junior champion); 2, P. Ball, Shiverers; 3, J. Sinclair, Falkirk 50 yards girls' breast stroke —1, Jeffrey, Shiverers; 2, M. Mercer, Shiverers (juvenile champion); 3, M. Niven, Falkirk. 50 yards boys' breast stroke—1, J. Gorst, Shiverers (club champion); 2, N. C. B. Green. Shiverers; 3. H. 1 *• t.i Falkirk. Men's three-a-side inter-styles team race (Banks Trophy contest, open to Scotland) —1, Glasgow Police (W. Burns, H. Smith, and G. Anderson); 2, Renfrew Baths; 3. Falkirk Baths. 50 yards girls' free style—1, A. Edmeads, Shiverers, 2. P. Jolly. Shiverers; 3, I, Mason, Falkirk.

On 7th September;

SWIMMING NOTES INTER-CLUB CONTEST

Grangemouth Clubs Final Gala. The concluding gala of the season was staged by Grangemouth Swimming Club Tuesday evening at the swimming pond before a good turn-out of spectators. The gala took the form of inter-club contest, the visitors being team from Bathgate Swimming Club. A comprehensive programme of competitive events for men, women and children had been drawn up. and some keen contests were witnessed. In the end the visiting club proved themselves superior to the home club and won the contest by fair margin of points. In addition to the competitive events, exhibitions of high diving and fancy swimming were given by the following members of the visiting club: J. Lawrence, R. Watson, J. Waugh, E. M'Donald, and P. Watson. Results: Men's 50 yards breast stroke—A. Porteous, Bathgate. Men's 50 yards back stroke Tom Finlayson, Grangemouth Men's 50 yards free style H. Ballantine, Grangemouth Tom Finlayson. Mens 50 yards free style—H. Ballantine. Ladies 50 yards breast stroke—Jean Morrell, Grangemouth. Ladies' 50 back stroke—Billie O'Donnell, Bathgate. Ladies' 50 yards free style—Jean Munro, Bathgate. Gentlemen's medley team race—Bathgate (A. Porteous, T. Shields, R. Watson). Girls' 50 yards back stroke—C. Quinn, Bathgate. Girls' 50 yards breast stroke —May Lowe. Bathgate. Girls' 50 yards free style—Ann Pirie, Grangemouth. Ladies' medley team race—Bathgate (E. O'Donnell, R. Bishop and J. Munro). Boys' 50 yards free style team race— Bathgate. Girls' 50 yards free style team race— Bathgate.

In 1938, the Linlithgow Gazette reported that heating the pond was being considered

LINLITHGOWSHIRE GAZETTE FRIDAY JANUARY 21 1938.

Councillor Hamilton, who is son of the Bo'ness burgh foreman, brought forward an interesting proposal at a meeting of Grangemouth Town Council. He suggested that the season at the Grangemouth Swimming Pond could be considerably extended by heating the water. He said the pond at Cumnock was heated, and the Town Council, in agreeing to his proposal, instructed the Burgh Engineer to make enquiries at Cumnock, Stonehaven and Helensburgh with a view to ascertaining how it was done and the cost.

The 1938 season was to finish like this in late September;

THEIR LAST DIP FOR THE SEASON



Group of bathers taking advantage of the last week of the season at Grangemouth Swimming Pond.

Newspaper reports were sparse until 1943 when;

SWIMMING AWARD.

Well-known in local swimming circles and an enthusiastic member of Grangemouth Swimming Club prior to joining the forces, Mr Alex. Young has been awarded the bronze medallion certificate of the Royal Life Saving Society. He is now serving in the R.A.F. The certificate was awarded Mr Young after passing tests in practical knowledge of rescue, releasing from the clutch of the drowning, and for ability - to render aid to resuscitating and apparent drowned. In civil life Mr Young, who is 20 years age, was employed in Messrs Muirhead's sawmill. He is the fourth son of Mr and Mrs D. Young. 67 Lime Street. His second brother, William, serving in the Central Mediterranean, while his eldest brother is prisoner of war in Germany.

Once again reports are sparse, but in 1953 it was reported that a number of Falkirk swimmers competed at the gala of the Grangemouth Swimming Club last Saturday, but they found that the temperature of the water in the open air baths there was a bit on the chilly side. One Falkirk swimmer, indeed, obviously considered that discretion was the better part of valour. Instead of competing in his race he absented himself from his heat and was later discovered in the showers. The showers, too, were cold, but presumably he did not think they were quite as cold as the water in the pool!

In 1947;

SWIMMING GALA AT GRANGEMOUTH

Miss Cathie Gibson's fine exhibition.

A delightful summer evening favoured the swimming gala held at the Grangemouth Swimming Pool on Wednesday under the auspices of the Town Council's enterprising Entertainments Committee and the Grangemouth Amateur Swimming Association. Displays of swimming and diving were given by members of the Motherwell Swimming Club, including Miss Cathie Gibson, international swimming champion. Large numbers of spectators were attracted by the fine weather and the prospect of seeing Miss Gibson's exhibition, and long before the doors were open queues stretched completely around the outside of the enclosure. In opening the gala, Provost H. B. Peddie extended a very hearty welcome to the Motherwell Club. This was the fourth occasion on which the club had visited Grangemouth, and on each occasion the Grangemouth people had been glad to take the opportunity to witness the prowess of a team so loaded with national and international honours. In particular, he would like to welcome two young swimmers who had recently gained such wonderful successes and had brought Scottish swimming to the forefront in the national and international spheres, Miss Cathie Gibson and Mr Ian M'Donald, (Applause.) He felt that the large attendance of spectators that evening was by way of congratulation to these two for their wonderful achievement. Grangemouth people who had witnessed their performances on a former visit had since followed their careers with very great interest. He also welcomed Miss Margaret Girvan, a young swimmer of great promise who was following in the footsteps of Miss Nancy Riach and Miss Gibson. Councillor Mrs Leslie, convener of the Entertainments Committee, who also spoke, welcomed Mr M'Donald, secretary of the club, who was to give a running commentary on the programme.

In 1947 Nancy Riach, from Motherwell, mentioned in the article above would have a profound and lasting effect on Scottish Swimming.

FALKIRK BATHS



The arrival of FALKIRK OTTERS and the “McGregors”

With the opening of Falkirk baths, the Falkirk Otters water polo team had been gaining a number of successes. Mr D. B. McGregor, the Falkirk Baths master as a former Olympic Games player, was an enthusiast for the sport, and his policy was to encourage young swimmers to take up the game. There were already several promising players in the Otters’ team, and with the passage of years and increased experience they were expected to make their mark in Scottish water polo circles.

BOBBY MCGREGOR

Robert Bilsand McGregor, MBE (born 3 April 1944), nicknamed the "Falkirk Flyer", is a Scottish former competitive swimmer who competed in eight events at the 1964 and 1968 Summer Olympics. He won a silver medal in the 100-metre freestyle in 1964 and finished fourth in the 100-metre freestyle and 4x100-metre freestyle relay in 1968. He was a second favourite for the 1963 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award. In 2002 he was inducted into the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame. Olympic selectors could not believe that he trained in a 25-metre pool in Falkirk when the selectors arrived to critique him prior to the Tokyo Olympics.

McGregor competed at the 1962 and 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, winning a silver medal on each occasion in the 110-yard Freestyle.

He retired from swimming in 1968 and worked as an architect in Glasgow. He lives in Helensburgh with his wife and family. His father, David McGregor, was an Olympic water polo player.

It would not be till after the war that Falkirk Otters were formed about 1948 and an intense local rivalry commenced. The history of Grangemouth ASC became intertwined with Falkirk Otters for a number of important reasons. In Falkirk Otters AGM in 1949, their President, David Rattray, referred "to the lack of interest shown during the past session". On 30th March 1949 CARNEGIE A.S.C. v. FALKIRK OTTERS —The new Falkirk club, Otters, took part in their first interclub event on Thursday evening last week when they visited Dunfermline and engaged the local Carnegie team in a series of events.

RLY 10/10/2018