

PAGEANT OF BLANTYRE

EVENTS IN LOCAL HISTORY DATING FROM THE 13th CENTURY

CLEVER DISPLAY OF TALENT IN MINERS' INSTITUTE

"It is an interesting pastime to review the history of one's village, especially when it has such old and romantic associations as ours and to dwell, with an effort to understand, upon the interests and work of its earlier inhabitants. . . . The great discovery which transformed the peaceful parish into one of Lanarkshire's busiest centres was made in 1867 when, to quote the "Annals," "the boring of the soil revealed the astounding fact, which caused all the lairds, and others, too, to leap for joy, that one hundred fathoms down, there were seams of coal of great thickness, and as excellent in quality as any to be found throughout broad Scotland."

The foregoing excerpt from the programme of the "Pageant of Blantyre," produced in the Blantyre Miners' Institute on Wednesday and Thursday of this week, vividly reviews all that the pageant depicted in the trend towards modern history, having its climax in the coronation celebrations of 1937.

The pageant was produced by members and friends of the High Blantyre Parish Church Sunday School and the scenes were arranged by Miss Bethia R. M. Campbell, M.A. (a daughter of our well-known local nurseryman), who was also responsible for the tuition of the players. The duties of commentator in the introduction of the various scenes were admirably discharged by Miss Jessie S. W. Orr and the musical accompaniments were in the hands of Mr W. Galbraith.

The pageant consisted of twenty-one scenes which covered a period in local history dating from the 13th century, when the monks occupied Blantyre Priory, until last year's Coronation celebrations. In its entirety the pageant was carried out on a lavish scale and excelled any previous production ever attempted in the town. It was obvious to all who witnessed the show that a great amount of time and energy must have been expended by the tutor and members of the cast in preparing the pageant, but the success of the venture was ample reward for their efforts. From the first scene until the last everything was executed without falter and provided the audience with entertainment of a first-class order. The satisfaction they obtained from watching the trend of events in local history was manifest in the applause which greeted the efforts of the players.

Miss G. Chambers, as herald, announced the opening of the pageant with trumpet blast and a reading by Mrs N. Scott led up to the premier

W. Bethel, T. Watson and A. Struthers.

The subsequent scene brought the audience into touch with the first Lord Blantyre of 1606. The part was played by Mr G. M'Alpine and Mr A. Scott adopted the role of James VI. of Scotland.

In the 1660's, in scene five, the beautiful Frances Theresa Stuart, played by Mrs M. Carruthers, figured prominently, and the sentimental love for the charming young lady was provided by the gay Lord Arlington in the person of Mr J. Carruthers.

The old-time dance "Lennoxlove to Blantyre" furnished the basis of the sixth scene and the dancers included the Misses J. Dunsmore, J. P. Dunsmore, M. M'Creddie, J. Black, M. Allan, G. Chambers, C. M'Farlane, J. M'Corquodale and M. M'Phie.

A Blantyre Kirk Session meeting of 1693, depicted in the seventh scene, created quite an amount of gaiety amongst the audience. The questions put by individuals of the Session and the decisions arising therefrom no doubt added comedy to the scene. Here Mr A. Scott played the part of Rev. Robert Landesse and the elders comprised Messrs A. Todd, T. Watson, J. Lee, W. M'Killop, A. Hislop, A. Struthers and G. M'Alpine.

The parish school scene in the 1730's, which came next, also provided plenty to laugh at, particularly when it was pointed out by one bright scholar that the schoolmaster, Mr J. Lee, had been accused by one of the other pupils of being seen making love to a young lady on the East Kilbride Road. The pupils were — Masters A. Baird, R. Martin, T. Watson, D. Roehhead, E. Young, W. Young, R. Smith and the Misses E. Hay, E. Borland, M. M'Kinley and M. Watson.

Scene nine entitled "The Highlandman's Year" (1745) portrayed a family gathering in a country home just after the Jacobite rebellion and the conversation which ensued amongst the members concerning the final overthrow of the Stuart dynasty. The players contributing to the success of this scene were Mrs N. Scott (mother); Miss B. M'Alpine (grannie); Mr A. Scott (father); Miss G. Chambers (Mirren); Miss M. Watson (little Kate); Master R. Smith (Jock) and Mr A. Hislop (Bob).

After a short interval the tenth scene brought before the audience the period of 1761 when Professor John Millar was a popular figure. The part of the Professor was played by Mr H. Richmond and his law

by, J. Beitch, M. M'Kinley, H. Smith, J. Struthers and Masters A. Baird, R. Martin, D. Roehhead, T. Watson, E. Young and W. Young.

Another big event in local history, the great explosion of 1877, was the basis for scene fifteen. The comforting of the relatives was portrayed in tableau form with Miss G. Chambers as the angel and M. J. Carruthers as singer. Others taking part were Miss C. M'Farlane, Miss J. P. Dunsmore and Mr A. Struthers.

The opening of new churches in the period round about 1880 was depicted in the 16th scene, when the Livingstone Memorial, Stonefield Parish, the East Free and St. Joseph's came into being. The church-goers taking part in this scene brought comedy relief in their old-fashioned style of dress and their informal meeting after the services. The players were Mrs M. Smith, Mrs N. Scott, the Misses M'Creddie, J. P. Dunsmore, H. Smith, M. Watson, A. Davidson, B. M'Alpine, J. M'Corquodale; Masters R. Martin and W. Young, and Messrs G. M'Alpine, W. Bethel, J. Mackie, H. Richmond, W. M'Killop, T. Watson, A. Todd and A. Scott.

The next scene portrayed concert artistes of 1900 with vocal renderings of "The Crookit Bawbee" by Mrs M. Carruthers and "Soldiers of the Queen" by Mr H. Richmond.

Miss J. P. Dunsmore portrayed the figure of Peace in scene 18, which covered the period of the Great War 1914-18. Miss B. M'Alpine had the roll of nurse; Miss B. Campbell, reader; and Mrs H. Scott, soloist, with the soldier parts played by Messrs W. Bethel, A. Hislop, J. Lee, J. Mackie, G. Mackie, G. M'Alpine, R. Paterson, A. Struthers, W. M'Killop, A. Smith and D. Muir.

The 19th scene dealt with another big historical event locally, namely, the opening of the Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone in 1929. In this scene Miss A. Davidson as the daughter recounted from the Press report to her father, portrayed by Mr A. Scott, all that had taken place on that memorable day. The "Wraith of Livingstone" was done by Mr J. Moonie and Mrs N. Scott performed the part of reader.

In scene 20 a tribute was paid to the late Dr. John Cowan Wilson in a reading by Mrs N. Scott.

Scene 21, celebrating the coronation of 1937, was the grand finale. The singing quartette was Mrs M. Smith, Mrs N. Scott, Mr J. Carruthers and Mr H. Richmond, and the dancers included the Misses J. Black, G. Chambers, J. P. Dunsmore, M. M'Creddie, and Messrs A. Hislop, J. Lee, W. M'Killop and G. M'Alpine.

On both evenings of the production the hall was packed to capacity, and the proceeds will be devoted to High Blantyre Church Sunday

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introduction of the various scenes were admirably discharged by Miss Jessie S. W. Orr and the musical accompaniments were in the hands of Mr W. Galbraith.

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Miss G. Chambers, as herald, announced the opening of the pageant with trumpet blast and a reading by Mrs N. Scott led up to the premier scene. This brought the audience back to the time of the 13th century, when the monks occupied the Blantyre Priory. This scene dwelt wholly with discourse amongst the monks in the presents of their domain and those who played the part of the colourful personalities of the age were Mrs Carruthers and the Misses G. Chambers, M. Allan, J. Black, J. Dunsmore, J. P. Dunsmore, M. M'Creddie and B. M'Alpine.

Scene two depicted the archers in the 15th century when "Makar" was a leading personality. The character part was played by Mr J. Carruthers and his archer colleagues were Messrs W. M'Killop, A. Hislop, J. Lee and M. Mackie.

In the third scene a service in the Blantyre Parish Church in 1567 was capably portrayed by those taking part. Mr H. Richmond adopted the role of the "Lettergae" and Mr J. Moonie played the part of minister of the day, the Rev. Wm. Chyrnside. Members of the congregation were Mrs N. Scott, Mrs E. Smith, Miss A. Davidson, Miss J. P. Dunsmore, Miss M. M'Creddie, and Messrs A. Todd,

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After a short interval the tenth scene brought before the audience the period of 1761 when Professor John Millar was a popular figure. The part of the Professor was played by Mr H. Richmond and his law class comprised Messrs W. Bethel, J. Mackie, J. Moonie, A. Smith and D. Muir.

With scene eleven came the founding of the Blantyre Mills in the 1790's. The founders, David Dale and James Watt, were portrayed by Mr J. Carruthers and Mr A. Scott.

One of the greatest events in local history, David Livingstone as a boy, was depicted in scene twelve. The period was 1828 when Livingstone worked as a boy in Blantyre Mills. At that time, too, he combined work with study in order to fit himself for the great missionary work which he was to undertake later. Master R. Smith took the part of David and Miss A. Davidson, David's mother.

Messrs A. Hislop, W. M'Killop and A. Struthers depicted early miners of 1868 in the thirteenth century scene, and in the subsequent scene the period of 1875, ushered in the opening of new schools. Mrs M. Carruthers did the part of the school teacher and the pupils were the Misses E. Barron, E. Borland, E.

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On both evenings of the production the hall was packed to capacity, and the proceeds will be devoted to High Blantyre Church Sunday School and the Blantyre Nursing Association.

The make-up of the artistes was looked after by Mr David Goodall, Glasgow, Mr Frank Stevenson, Blantyre and Miss Cronshaw of Stonehouse, and to them, along with others who assisted in the making of costumes, staging, lighting, etc., the producer conveys her most sincere thanks.

NEWTON PIT TRAGEDY ECHO

Without knowing that her brother, Myles M'Hugh, had been killed in a Newton colliery accident a fortnight ago, Miss Sarah M'Hugh died in a nursing home at Bothwell at the week-end.

Miss M'Hugh had been ailing for several months and her condition was so critical at the time of her brother's death that it was considered inadvisable to inform her of what had occurred.

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In the pavilion hall, which, from a point of view, the centre there being a fountain, plates, and with the sides, and on it, the effluents.

The plates at Messrs Colville is the Clyde

On the left of is one of the boiler-plate manufactured in the Clydebridge and produced over the finest steel.

The pavilion trial films, and special picture "The Romance