

# TODAY'S NEWS

*Have I got old news for you?*

## The Late Provost John Barr, Ardrossan

### 1907

#### Health of the County

The prevalence of infectious disease in the District continues at a comparative low ebb, only 23 cases in the course of a month. Of these 22 were of **diphtheria**, mostly in or near Lochwinnoch. In view of the prevalence of the disease the village schools were closed for almost 4 weeks.

### 1900

#### Christmas Entertainment

In the Parish Church on Christmas evening, the children attending the Sabbath School were entertained to a lecture entitled "**Britain and Boer**" illustrated by lime-light views. The Rev. Stevenson presided. Mr. Blair read the narrative, and Mr. Ferguson manipulated the lantern.

### 1897

We had distinguished **visitors** in Lochwinnoch last Saturday. The Bridgeton Division Liberal Association, numbering about **500**, came from Glasgow by special train.

*This is another old name now dropped from the long list of "Lochwinnoch worthies" who, in former times, went forth into the busy world from that country village and parish.*

**H**e was born at his father's residence, in the Main-street of the town, in the year 1795. His father, Matthew Barr, was long known as one of the largest proprietors of house-property and weaving-shops in the place. Immediately on the erection of the cotton mills,—the old mill being built in 1788 at Calder Park, the new mill in 1789 at Calderhaugh, and a third at Boghead about the same time,—Lochwinnoch soon increased in size and population, and before the end of the century had become a thriving manufacturing village. The erection of these factories necessarily caused a demand for workers and house accommodation—hence the granting of many additional feus by Mr. McDowall, of Castlesemple, the proprietor, and the origin of the New Town, by which not only the population, but the industry and circumstances of the whole surroundings, were improved and augmented in a surprising degree. Fifty-three new houses were built in the village, and ground feued for many more, between the years 1788 and 1795.

The population had increased from 1530 individuals in the year 1755 to 2613 in 1791. Besides the trades common to the place and the

1867

**The Glasgow & South Western Railway Co.** offer extra facilities at present for transport to and from Lochwinnoch Loch. For the practice of the invigorating exercise of skating.

1904

**Lochwinnoch Rainfall**

During the Month of October 3.9 inches of rain fell being 7.33 inches less than the same month last year.

1897

There seems to be **laudable** attempts being made for establishing industries in Lochwinnoch other than those we already have. There has been talk for some time of a Bleachwork being started, but nothing has, as yet, come of the proposal. The latest however, is a calico printing work which will employ a few hundred people. The two cabinet factories which are presently being erected are, I hear, expected to employ **double** the number of hands which were employed in Calder Cabinet. So the prospect is hopeful.

cotton workers, there were 135 weavers, and that number on the increase till there were about fifty workshops containing nearly 200 looms for weaving silk and cotton. Matthew Barr, the father of the future Provost, being a weaver himself, brought up his sons in the same trade, and had added house to house and shop to shop till he was proprietor of four different weaving shops and house accommodation for about twenty families.

Three of these shops for weavers were about the centre of the Mains-street, almost opposite the foot of the "Crawroad" and "Pinnimie's Well." The shops had each a distinct name, by which they were well known all over the locality. Matthew Barr's "front shop," "the back shop," and "the end shop," were all filled with looms, and were generally well let. The fourth shop was in Church-street, along with four or five of the dwelling-houses. Matthew Barr had his sons, who were put to the loom when very young, under his own care in one or other of his loomsteads in the Main-street. Indeed, juvenile labour was much in request in those days. Both boys and girls were to be found seated at a loom, or sent to the cotton factory, after getting a little schooling during day, the rest of their education being picked up in the evening schools afterwards. At the mills, work and wages were found for the youngsters who before that had nothing to do. Weaving was brisk and paid well, so that Provost Barr might well make the remark, which he sometimes did in his more exalted station, that "he was able to earn three shillings per day when he was only eleven years old."