

WOMEN MAKE DENNISIC
s a woman's world



Discovering Women's Heritage in Dennistoun



Published by Glasgow Women's Library with assistance from
the Glasgow City Council East End Area partnership fund.

March 2024



Contents

Introduction	1
Discovering the women of Dennistoun	3
Glasgow Museums Resource Centre group Visit	5
Dennistoun Dynamos	7
Duke St Prison	8
The Cullan, Conway and Mullen families in the GWL archive	11
Behind the statue - discovering the hidden stories of Buffalo Bill's wild west circus	13
Tenement life	17
Dennistoun Palais	19
Working in Wills' cigarette factory	22
Irene McInnes and the history of Reidvale Housing Association	25
Whitevale baths	29
The Crown Creighton Pub	33
New Dennistoun	35

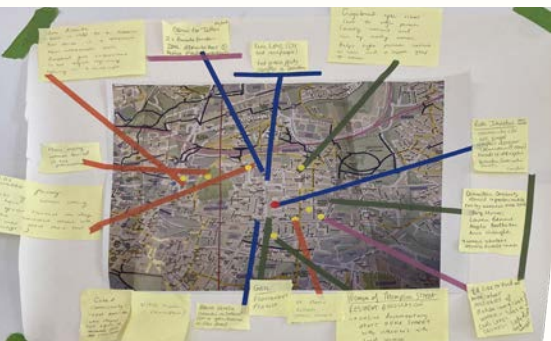
Introduction

Glasgow Women's Library is no ordinary library. It is the only Accredited Museum dedicated to women's history in the UK and also a designated Recognised Collection of National Significance. A place for browsing and being inspired. GWL is welcoming, free and open to all, with programmes of events and activities that offer something for everyone: from film screenings to literacy support; from talks to supported volunteering opportunities; and from exhibitions to workshops. GWL's extensive outreach programme can also offer support for women's projects in local areas around Scotland.

One important part of the library's programme over several years has been the development of women's heritage walks and the supporting of community based women's heritage projects. In towns and cities around Scotland, the lives and stories of many women remain forgotten or unrecorded. This project aimed to start discovering some of the women who are part of Dennistoun's past and also part of its' future. We worked with local women and organisations and formed a project group comprised of women who lived in Dennistoun and GWL volunteers and learners. The group were trained in research and oral history skills and did everything from craft work and doing research at the Mitchell library to interviewing Dennistoun women about their lives and chatting to people at local events. We had so many ideas and discovered so much, that fitting it into one small map and booklet involved difficult choices. We know there are many more stories about women's lives and histories in Dennistoun to uncover, but we hope you enjoy what we've discovered so far!

To find out more about GWL's women's heritage work or to find out more about support for projects in your local area, please visit our website: www.womenslibrary.org.uk, or email info@womenslibrary.org.uk

Discovering the women of Dennistoun



In October 2021, Glasgow Women’s Library and Lingo Flamingo invited women from Dennistoun to tell us about their own history and share their ideas about what parts of women’s history and lives in Dennistoun could be celebrated. They created three amazing maps full of ideas and questions. From suffragettes to the steamies at Whitevale Baths, to the women who worked in the cigarette factories, to Lulu and Dorothy Paul, there lots of people and places.



Above: Maps created in October 2021 | Credit: GWL
Below: First meeting in October 2021 | Credit: GWL

After that initial inspiration, thanks to funding support from Glasgow City Council's East End Area Partnership fund, a group of volunteers and Dennistoun-based women began to meet at Culloden Street Community Hall. Some of the group had done history research before. Others hadn't, but knew a lot about the local area or had some great stories.



Women's History in Dennistoun – film showing and information event

Wednesday 31st May, 11am to 1pm
Culloden Street Hall, 1 Culloden Street, Dennistoun

Free of charge, 16+



Who are the women in Dennistoun's history and how are they remembered? Do you know of any local women from the past or present whose story deserves to be told? Come along to find out more about this new women's history project.

We will also be showing a BBC film, The Secret History of Our Streets – Duke Street Glasgow, which tells the history of Duke Street and the people who lived and worked there.

Have a tea or coffee and a slice of cake and share your story!



Name..... Dorothy Paul.

Date/year of birth..... 1937.

What is her connection to Dennistoun?.....

She was an actress /comedian + writer. She wrote ^(of) amongst other things a great piece about the injustice of women + the hardships in a speech in "The Stearnie"

Why does this woman deserve to be remembered.....

She is inspirational, funny and worthy of remembrance



PS. She got a BAFTA for her performance in The Stearnie

Right, below: Local residents came to Culloden Street Hall to find out more about the project and share their own memories and ideas about women to be remembered | Credit: GWL

Above left: Poster created by our project group | Credit: GWL

In July, we visited the Glasgow Room at the Mitchell Library and discovered some amazing images and stories from the lives and times of Annie Oakley to old maps of Dennistoun that traced its development from open countryside with fields and farms to becoming part of a busy industrial city. It was a bit like going on a treasure hunt – one of the things we found was an article from the Daily Record about the Crown Creighton Bar in Duke Street and we looked into it further. Following the Equality Act in 1975, which made it illegal for pubs to refuse to serve women, the article referred to some ‘women’s libbers’ from Glasgow Women’s Liberation Movement storming pubs to assert their right to be there.

On further research, we found that the woman in the picture was actually an ex Tennent’s Lager Lovely who had accompanied the Daily Record reporter for the occasion – the Glasgow Women’s Liberation Movement did in fact go into pubs in Glasgow’s West end, but not in Dennistoun! You can see the results later on in this book. We found lots more, including details of the lives of women who spent time in Duke Street jail, which became another group obsession!



The corner of Duke Street, left, and High Street showing the density of housing in the late nineteenth century. The social conditions were generally appalling in this part of the city and this was one of the reasons for the flight of the university to Gilmorhill. In 1853 Hugh Macdonald described the misery and squalidness of the East End and its ‘canopy of smoke’ created by the mix of domestic fire and industrial workshops, breweries, dyeworks, mills as well as the railway locomotives arriving at the new College (later High Street) Station and the huge marshalling yards and goods station, which can be seen here upper left.





In November, we went to visit the Glasgow Museum's Resource Centre. Most of the group hadn't been there before or even heard of this place, so it was a hugely interesting and informative visit for the project group. Being able to explore the treasure trove that is the GMRC was a great opportunity, made possible by Fiona Hayes who was the group's tour guide for the afternoon. We were fortunate enough to be able to view a range of items covering Dennistoun's rich history, such as; a portrait of the Dennistoun family (by Thoms Faed) from 1851 and a delicate nightgown made by a Duke St prisoner which was over 130 years old and in very good condition. After this we looked through a collection of material including The Dennistoun Rag (put out by the Reidvale Committee); Eastern Bells, an Edwardian era publication; and various cinema programmes.



The group really appreciated the intricate level of detail and skill in the lovely nightgown made by a woman prisoner. It was apparently made for a wedding trousseau - we assumed the woman wasn't paid for her work! Doreen made a pencil drawing of it.

Report from Mara Hadden, placement student with the project

From top: Researching in the Glasgow Room at the Mitchell Library; Discovering old maps of Dennistoun's streets (and fields!); Discovering historical books about Dennistoun; Doreen's drawings of a nightdress hand-stitched by woman in Duke Street prison | Credit: GWL



Dennistoun Dynamos

While exploring the history of women in brewing for the Dennistoun trail map, researcher Heather visited the Tennent's Museum in Duke Street. 'I didn't find much about women in brewing at all - except for the wall of Lager Lovelies!' Between 1965 and 1991, beauty pageant queens, professional models, 'housewives' and 'girls-next-door' were featured on Tennent's lager cans. Dozens of women appeared on the labels over the decades. With hindsight it seems very outdated and sexist, but being a Lager Lovely was seen by many at the time as being quite a big celebrity and the Lager Lovelies are still viewed with some affection by people who remember the originals. At one of our craft sessions headed by tutor Loa, we were explaining to group members under 40 what Lager Lovelies were and then came up with the idea of creating our own feminist response - the Dennistoun Dynamos!

We created cans decorated with images and some words about some of the amazing women we had discovered during our project.



The Dennistoun Dynamos (from left to right) - The Suffragettes, Bessie Watson (piper), Loa Pour Miza, women factory workers and girls attending Golfhill School in 1905 (from GWL archive), Wendy Wood who spent time in Duke Street prison, Lewa Thomas, Annie Oakley | Credit: GWL

Duke St Prison

Doreen wrote a blog about her interest in Duke St prison:

'Hi, I'm Doreen, one of the cleaners at Glasgow Women's Library. Back in 2018 or 2019 I helped to research two suffragette trails at the library. I have decided to get involved in the Dennistoun history project because I would like to learn about Duke Street prison. I have been fortunate to never have been in prison – I have Asperger's Syndrome and dyslexia and I have heard many times that a large proportion of the prison population is neurodivergent. Suffragettes such as Helen Crawford (Anderson), Ethel Moorhead and Dorothea Chalmers (Smith) served sentences in Duke Street prison.

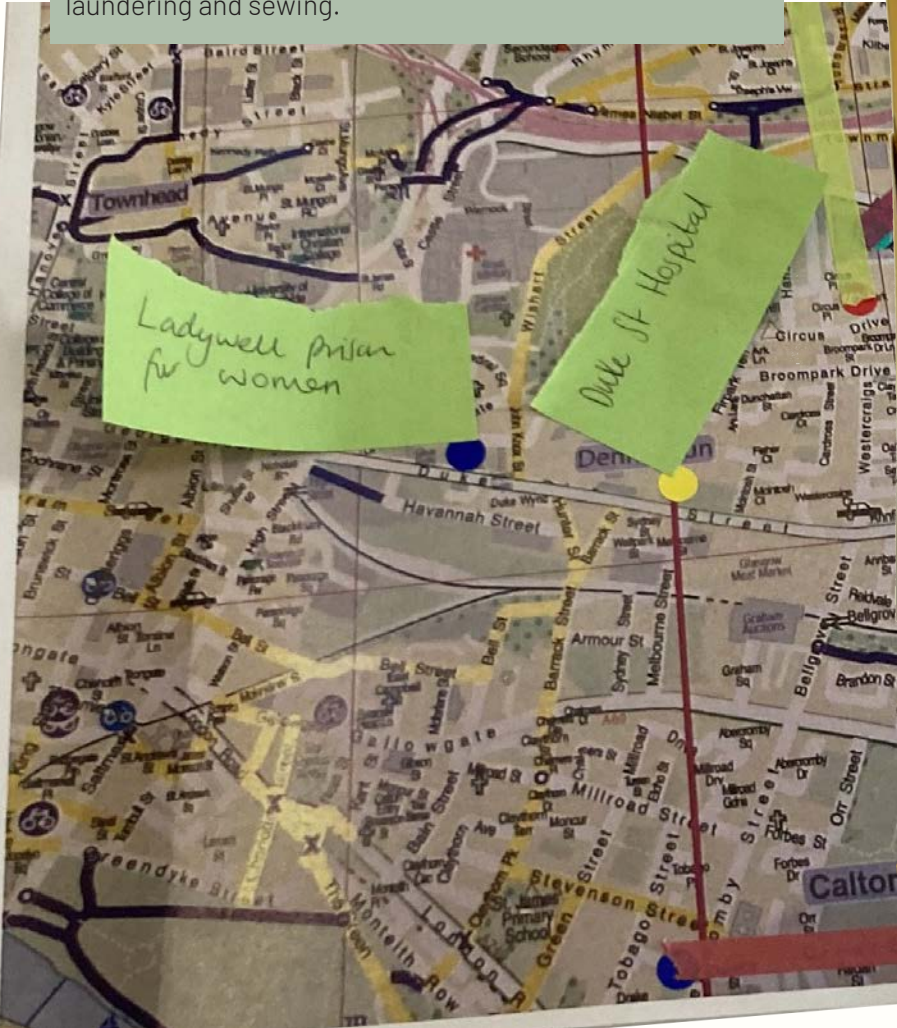


Women being discharged from Duke Street Prison, 1909." | Credit: Print 4013a.
Reproduced with the permission of Glasgow Caledonian University, Research Collections, Heatherbank Museum of Social Work.

We have an umbrella stand on display in the library that was rescued from a skip outside Duke Street prison when it was getting demolished and word of mouth has it that it was painted green, white and pink by suffragette prisoners. I spoke about it in my appearance on

BBC Radio 4's Caretakers programme. During my involvement in helping with planning GWL's Open the Door festival, one of the featured writers was Wendy Wood who was a campaigner for Scottish Independence. I read that she was Auntie Gwen on Jackanory in the early 1970s (according to www.clan-woodsociety.co.uk) and served 60 days in Duke Street prison because she refused to pay her National Insurance. I also read that Susan Newell was executed at Duke Street prison in 1923 – she may have been the last woman to be executed in Scotland. During its last years of operation from around 1882 to 1955, it was a women only prison. I'm looking forward to researching these fascinating women.'

Duke Street prison was opened in 1798. It became female only in 1882 (when Barlinnie prison became operational) until its closure in 1955. It became a major Victorian institution, although, in the words of James Cowan 'the Victorian mindset often meant that female offenders were sent to ... asylums because it was felt that the unsettling phenomenon of the "gentle sex" committing crimes must by definition imply mental instability'. The regime at Duke Street prison was harsh with hard labour being required from most inmates although by the mid-19th century some more privileged inmates were allowed to work at knitting, laundering and sewing.



DETA
IN O
PRIS
EARL





Bessie Watson was born in 1900 in Edinburgh's Old Town. At the age of seven, her parents encouraged her to take up the pipes in order to strengthen her lungs as a precaution against tuberculosis.

Her first set of pipes was a specially made half-sized set, made by Robertson of Grove Street, as she was too small to have the lung capacity to inflate a full-sized bag properly. By the age of nine, she was playing the pipes at suffragette demonstrations. Bessie also played the pipes in the street outside Duke Street prison to comfort the suffragettes imprisoned there.

Originally, if a child was born in Duke Street prison, the child received an endowment of one farthing per day for life. In later years, arrangements were made for all births to take place outside the prison so that the child would not have the stigma of this being the address of their birth.

It's not just the suffragettes who were imprisoned in Duke Street for their beliefs. Wendy Wood, a Scottish writer, artist and social activist, campaigned passionately for prison reform and deliberately got herself arrested and incarcerated in Duke St prison. She wanted to observe the conditions there for herself. She undertook a protest of non-payment of National Insurance. At her trial, Wendy opted for a prison sentence rather than a £15 fine and spent several weeks at the prison, discovering for herself the appalling conditions. Afterwards she lobbied the authorities mercilessly until Duke Street was finally closed.

Left: Map created at Lingo Flamingo in October 2021, showing area where Duke St prison used to be | Credit: GWL

Centre: A "Denniston Dynamo" can created by Doreen in honour of the writer and campaigner Wendy Wood who was incarcerated in Duke St prison
Credit: GWL

The Cullan, Conway and Mullen families in the GWL archive

In the Women's Library archive there is set of family documents generously donated by the Mullan-Conway family who spent years of their life in Glasgow's East End, more specifically at Plant Street and Onslow Drive in Dennistoun. Alexandra Compton from the project group spent time with this archive and teased out some of this family's story.



Image from the GWL's Cullan, Conway and Mullen family archive of a Golfhill public school class in 1905. The photograph has a pencil inscription that says Agnes Kincaid (who was to become Agnes Mullen) is "third from the right" | Credit: GWL

'Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, many Irish families immigrated to Glasgow in search of a better life for themselves and their families. In comparison to the political turmoil and famine affecting much of Ireland, Glasgow offered a more stable living environment and vast job opportunities, such as in the shipyards and steelworks.

The Mullan family moved early in this immigration boom, living in Glasgow from at least the 1860s. The Cullen family moved to Glasgow from Dungannon around 1890, soon to be followed by their former neighbours, the Conway family, who relocated to near the Cullen family in Bridgeton. The Rooney family also moved from Ireland to Glasgow in the 1890s, finding work in the shipyards. By this time, strong Irish communities were forming in Glasgow.

The Cullen and Conway families soon became one through the marriage of Patrick Conway and Mary Cullen in 1916. At the time of her marriage to Patrick, Mary worked as a tram car conductress, or 'clippie'. Glasgow was the first city in Britain to employ women as clippies during World War I, to fill



255 Onslow Drive, where the Mullan/Conway family lived, as it is today | Credit: GWL

the employee gap created when working men were sent to war. Only clippies and women welders managed to secure equal pay during WWI, when the average pay for a woman was half of men's pay.

Three years later, the Rooney and Mullan families also merged, when Charles Mullan and Margaret Rooney married in 1919 and moved to 22 Plant Street, Dennistoun. Here they had six children, including Agnes Mullan, who lived here until her marriage to Joseph Conway at St. Anne's Church in 1947, bringing all four families together. Together, they lived in various parts of the East End of Glasgow, before moving back to Dennistoun at 255 Onslow Drive.

After completing her education in 1937 Agnes began working

as a machinist, before joining the Women's Land Army in 1943. The Women's Land Army had been re-established in 1939, to help increase the amount of food grown within Britain during WWII. To apply for this position, Agnes obtained a letter of recommendation from Reverend Gerald A. Harvey of St. Anne's Church, deeming her "honest, trustworthy, and hardworking".

During her time with the Woman's Land Army her future husband, Joseph, was stationed with the Royal Navy, where she sent him a photograph of herself in her Women's Land Army uniform. These uniforms were revolutionary as the women were allowed to wear breeches. This gave them the same freedom of movement as men for the physical labour involved – the women were using ploughs, driving tractors, and much more. Many of the women also cut their hair short due to the laborious work, which often meant that they were viewed with suspicion and hostility by the local rural residents.'

Behind the statue – discovering the hidden stories of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West circus



When visiting the Mitchell Library, we found a lot of books about the Buffalo Bill Wild West show. There is a statue of Bill in Alexandra Park, but the group felt that this was quite a problematic history since the show exploited Native Americans and misrepresented their history. We decided to investigate some of the women who were involved in this

important part of Dennistoun’s past.

Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show came to Dennistoun from 16th November 1891 to 27th February 1892. At 8pm on the 16th November a grand procession of the show’s participants was viewed by thousands in Duke Street. The show itself presented a white American view of history, demonising Native Americans, and was in many ways offensive, racist and exploitative. The Battle of Wounded Knee, in which many people from the Lakota tribe were massacred, had taken place



just a year before in 1890, yet 'the 1891-92 tour of Britain included a "Wounded Knee orphan" ... The young boy had survived the massacre and travelled with his adoptive parents, No Neck and his wife Ellen.'

While the majority of participants were men, there were some notable exceptions to this. Annie Oakley, the famous woman sharp shooter, was lauded as 'the crowning charm of the whole show ... Night after night, Annie held audiences spellbound with her ... dexterity ... She would shatter ten glass balls thrown successively in the air, in as many seconds, changing her rifle ten times in the process.'

Native American men who featured in the show travelled with their families and Native American women could be seen in Glasgow on shopping trips. According to The Baillie newspaper of December 23rd, 1891, two Native American women 'spent twenty shillings apiece in the medical stores of Renfield Street, on perfume and toilet requisites.' There is clear evidence that Native American women also featured in the show. Their description shows the characteristically chauvinistic and racist attitudes of the time. The Glasgow Herald's review of the opening night of the show said 'the first really striking tableau was a ... war dance ... in which the Indian braves in eagle's plumes and war paint cut fantastic capers to the beat of tom toms and the monotonous chant of native women.'

Left: Annie Oakley in custom-made tartan outfit, Glasgow, 1891. Watson & Wilson, 83 Jamaica St
Credit: Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.

Centre: Marcella LeBeau; "Wet Plate Photograph by Shane Balkowitsch of Nostalgic Glass Wet Plate Studio, Plate #3290 taken on 9-13-2019"

The Lakota Ghost Dance shirt



In 1892, George C. Crager, a member of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, sold a Ghost Dance shirt and several other items to the curator of Kelvingrove Museum. Ghost Dance shirts are objects of power to the wearer and sacred to Native American tribes.

The so-called “Glasgow Ghost Shirt” was discovered by a man from the Cherokee nation named John Earl during a visit to a museum in Glasgow.

The shirt had been in the Kelvingrove Museum since 1892. This shirt is believed to have been taken from one of the victims of the massacre at Wounded Knee. In 1998, Glasgow Museums agreed to return the shirt to the Lakota people. Native American woman, Marcella Le Beau, created a replacement shirt and this was presented to Glasgow Museums in 1998. Marcella was the great granddaughter of one of the survivors of the massacre at Wounded Knee. You can see the replacement shirt displayed at Kelvinhall.

Above: Marcella LeBeau with Ghost Dance shirt at South Dakota State Historical Society, 2016
Credit: Permission of Kathy Aplan.

Right: Corner of Craigpark Drive and Onslow Square, where Jean and Ina lived | Credit: GWL

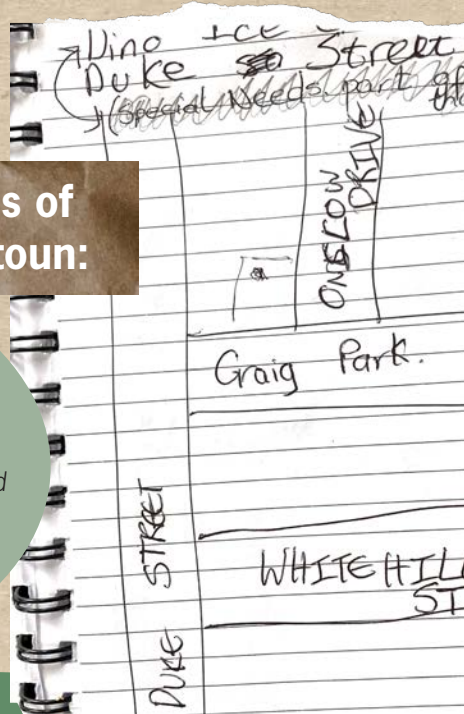
Tenement Life

Dennistoun's tenements ranged from flats occupied by working class families to spacious and more luxurious buildings. But for the majority of women living in tenements in Dennistoun or elsewhere was not a luxurious experience. The tenements were commonly one-room and two-room apartments, known as a 'single end' or a 'room and kitchen' respectively. In the 'room and kitchen' arrangement the room or parlour faced the street. A bed closet was provided on the wall opposite the window. These built-in beds were hidden from view behind a door, until they were forbidden by the Glasgow Buildings Regulation Act of 1900. The parlour would be furnished as well as the occupant could afford, and, despite the small size of these flats, was often "kept for best" and used only for visitors or for special occasions such as a wedding or a funeral. The family built-in bed was about 75 cm above the floor, so that a smaller bed could be stored below. People lived and slept in the kitchen at the rear. In the kitchen the open bed recess contained a bed that could be wheeled out at night for the children. Toilet facilities were provided by a communal water closet on the half-landing of the stair.



In working-class tenements the entrance to the close was a simple opening in the wall. In more luxurious tenements the close entrance might be decorated to match the windows on the floor above, or might have a porch reached by a flight of steps from street level. The close was the communal part of the tenement and in working-class communities it was a place of social interaction where neighbours met as they entered or departed from the building or took their turn to sweep the close or wash the stairs.

At the rear of the tenement was the back court. This enclosed space, or drying area, was the common property of everyone living in the tenement. It sometimes contained a communal wash-house with a cast iron boiler heated by a coal fire, which was available to residents on a rota basis. Where there was no wash-house, women had to transport the family washing to places such as Whitevale Baths, which feature in our history trail map.



We uncovered a few stories of tenement life from Dennistoun:

Mary King and her husband moved to 214 Finlay Drive during an air raid in the Second World War. *'we spent our first honeymoon shaking in our skins...after that like many others, when we heard the sirens ... we ran to the underground shelters in Alexander Park'* Mary lived in Finlay Drive from 1940 to 1980.

Doreen was at a family dinner and got talking to Elizabeth, who remembers her aunt Jean and aunt Ina used to live in tenements round the corner from one another at Craigpark Drive and Onslow Square. *'They used to communicate with one another through knocking on the walls in each flat, bedroom to living-room, through the shared wall. They had their own private communication system going!'*

Above: Notes and a map made while gathering Doreen's story | Credit: GWL

Family
WILLIS CIGARETTE FACTORY
PARADE.
CANDER
STREET

Cathy,

who we met at the Glasgow Golden Generations club in Battlefield, remembers her working class Dennistoun childhood: *'We didn't have much ... but some families were much worse off. My Mum used to buy clothes for other women's wains - there were no social services then...Alcohol was a big problem ... Men used to drink on a Friday night and they would spend all their wages sometimes. My auntie Mary used to pawn her husband's best suit on the Monday, then get it out again at the end of the week when he had his wages. There were times when he was looking for his suit to wear when going out and he couldn't find it because it was in the pawn shop!'*

Dorothy Paul, the Scottish

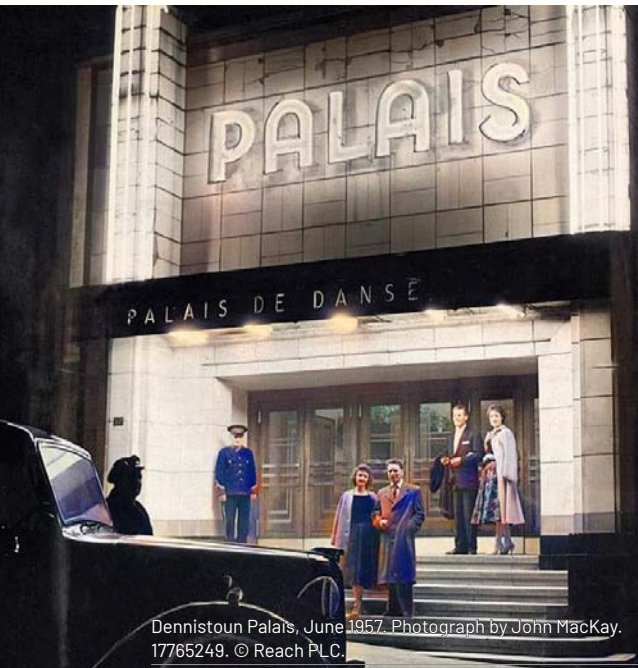
comedian, who was brought up in Dennistoun, talks in her memoir about moving into a new flat in the area: *'(my mum) was jumping about all over the place. "But come here 'til I show you the bathroom. Look at that! Hot and cold running water ... You can come and have a bath any time you want Lizzie. It'll save you going to Whitevale"... In our previous cold-water flat at 108 Cardross Street, ... it was a wee wash-down every day with a face-cloth at the sink and a visit to the baths once a week.'*

One woman who lived in Dennistoun for the first twenty years of her life with her parents and two sisters, went from Alexandra Parade to Golfhill Drive. She remembers living in the tenements and playing on the back courts and streets *'I remember my sisters and I, along with other kids in the building, would play kick-the-can, rounders, hide and seek - all sorts of games!'*

Dennistoun Palais

7 Roslea Drive is the site of the former Dennistoun Palais. We found lots of people talked about the Palais and had fond memories of it.

Glasgow has always been into dancing in a big way. After the First World War, there was a huge development in numbers for social dancing. For the first time ever, many young working class women came along in significant numbers and the dance hall industry was born. There were once more dance halls per person in Glasgow than in any other UK city - women wore their best dresses and the standards for dressing and dancing were very high.



Dennistoun Palais, June 1957. Photograph by John MacKay. 17765249. © Reach PLC.

The original Dennistoun Palais opened in 1922, but was destroyed by fire in 1936. When it was rebuilt in 1938, it was the biggest dance hall in Glasgow, allowing for a capacity of 1800 people. It was said that ten times round the dance floor represented jogging a mile! The dance floor itself was innovative; a sprung floor fit for purpose on the main level to accommodate all the movement of the dancers. The ceiling was covered in stars, reminiscent of the

famous Barrowland Ballroom. It's said that the singer Lulu, who was brought up in Dennistoun, also sang at the Palais early in her career, though we've been unable to verify this. In 1966, the building was converted into the "Rollarena" roller skating venue at a cost of £60,000. The building was then used by various supermarket chains into the 1990s, when it was replaced by housing.

The Palais was also known as the 'Palais de Dance' and was a major social venue for Glaswegian people. Fairly recently, a new bar has opened in Dennistoun and it is called The Palais Bar in honour of the old Dennistoun Palais history.

'I remember the Palais dance hall...it was beautiful inside with stars all over the ceiling... and a lovely night club downstairs that no one seemed to go to . I thought it was beautiful, all blue hidden lighting and white metal furniture on a verandah'

Evlynn spoke to her mum, Christina who is 98 years old and

remembers her dancing days at the Palais. *'The Dennistoun Palais ... was the greatest place to meet people...it was the greatest place to dance.*

I met your Dad there... The Palais is where we learned to dance - they had a Saturday afternoon teenager dance. The Palais opened from about two o'clock until about four. We went ourselves, from Crownpoint Road, over the Belgrove Bridge.

I was about 13 when I went to the Juniors. It was only open for half a day, one day a week. I think it was Saturday afternoon, not all week, and at that earlier time of 2pm, because they had to open at night...but maybe even sooner... It's that long ago...

So I went there as a young girl with my pals. Six of us all used to go; we'd see each other there. And you stood. Everybody stood. As soon as a dance finished, another one started. For the two o'clock...as a teenager getting dressed up, you always had something different to go to The Palais, you always liked to look as nice as you could. You were desperate to go there, to get all dressed up, with your pals. I would wear whatever was in fashion - flared skirts, nice blouses - and dresses as well... I wore high heels, and danced with high heels on!

When we were growing up, we'd be about 14 or 15, I never went to Barrowland. Mammie said not to go to Barrowland because... she'd something against it. And yet... all the best dancers went...there and the best bands too. The Palais was the most popular dance hall ... but ... the only band there was Laurie Blandford ... In the Playhouse you'd see the big bands - Joe Loss - and the American band leaders ... they ... all went to the Playhouse.

Every penny we had, we went to the dancing, every spare penny...and not just two or three times a week! ... When you were asked to dance, ... if you refused somebody...you couldn't dance that dance. You always had regulars - someone to lift you for a quickstep, a tango... Then, the three dances were in the intervals - the bands would be away for their tea or break ... if someone asked you, ... you had to stay up for the whole three dances ... They had lemonade and stuff - you could have tea... but ...Mostly if you were up dancing, you weren't interested in anything else. It was very busy, ... especially the Friday and Saturday. I remember if someone asked you home, if they hadn't on clothes we liked, we'd go out another door; there were two doors; they'd be waiting, and you'd be off! So - as soon as someone asked if they could see you home - if they fancied you - you'd say yes...but we would look out to see if they were nicely dressed; if not, we would go out that other door!...And then the next week, they'd say "what happened to you?" you'd say "I waited, and I never saw you..."

If I let them walk me home...we walked to the street round the corner so we could go up the close ... and after we said cheerio, I'd cut through the back court, they had palings in our bit - I would get through the paling, and they never knew where I lived - not unless I liked them! ... You could always get a boyfriend in the Palais, somebody nice, even if it didn't last long, you went to the pictures and that was it...it was a lovely atmosphere...We didn't go ... right away to be first in; we liked to go when we were all fresh, after the interval, so we were all done up... You went into the cloakroom, did your hair, and then to the main ballroom, it was lovely, it was a great place, The Palais.'



Christina Sharp and her husband, who met at the Dennistoun Palais, on their wedding day
Credit: GWL

Working in Wills' cigarette factory

When we visited the Glasgow Golden Generations group in Battlefield, we met several women who worked at Will's cigarette factory. Catherine interviewed them about their memories:

'Margaret Graham worked in Wills' in the early 1960s. She first worked in the MacFarlane biscuits factory where she says she made good money on the factory floor and every worker got a bag of broken biscuits at the end of the week. Apparently there were a lot of cream crackers in the bag – so many that families used them to build fires. This perk was to stop workers pilfering from the assembly line itself.

She moved to the Wills factory in the early 60s as that wage was £30+. A current worker had to vouch for your good character – this seemed to be the recruitment policy. The conditions were good; morning and afternoon breaks and lunch in the canteen where the food was reasonable. Shifts were usually 8.30 to 4.30 and staff clocked in by 8.30. If you were late 3 times, you were summarily sacked regardless of the

reason. She remembers the free for all at 4.30 leaving the factory and said everyone dreaded the random "stop and search" because they might miss their bus home! A perk of the job was the pack of 20 cigarettes they got at the end of each shift.



Worker at WD & HO Wills de-stemming leaf tobacco during cigar production, 1990. SC2535521. | Credit: © RCAHMS.

Men and women were organised to always work separately to avoid any shenanigans. Women were not allowed at that point to work there after they were married but, a few years later, those rules were relaxed to allow them to cover for holiday shifts etc. Later again, women could and did work, married and pregnant. Margaret also remembered the doll coming round as a marriage gift for the girl leaving. Workers all added money to the doll or doll's box as a leaving gift for the bride-to-be who couldn't come back to work.



Catherine interviewing the Glasgow Golden Generations group about their memories of living and working in Dennistoun | Credit: GWL

The work Margaret did sounds awful to me – she was sanguine about it. They sat at large tables and were given 10-12 tobacco leaves each. These were large and had to be held together by their stalks and bashed onto the table until the fibres were loosened and beginning to shred. They then cut off the stalks and the leaves were taken to the conveyor belts to be shredded further. The detritus left behind was brushed up and added to the conveyor belt too. This detritus also included dust etc. from the floor which people had trodden in from outside – Margaret never smoked herself because she knew what was in the cigarettes.

After paying her mum rent, Margaret had enough money for clothes and the dancing, where you hoped "to get a lumber" She remembers queuing for the Dennistoun Palais, as well as dancing at the Wellshot Halls on Wellshot Road.'

'Catherine also interviewed Martha, who worked as a dental nurse initially but left in 1970 to work in the Wills' Factory where the wages were substantially higher (up to £33 per week compared to approximately £17 as a dental nurse). Her memories of Wills' cigar section are mixed as she didn't really enjoy her time there. She worked in the cigar section which was much smaller than the cigarette sections. The working conditions sound poor. The women worked at large tables while rolling and folding the tobacco leaves etc. They worked two to a table but a very noisy machine separated them, so conversation was limited. To combat the noise, very loud pop music was played all the time: Martha remembers knowing all the Top 20 hits of the time as they were the soundtrack to her work there. Combined with the noisy environment of machines and constant music, there was no natural light via windows, so it was a depressing workplace for her. The women worked at the tables separating and folding the leaves and the male workers, all mechanics, "floated about" sorting out technical issues.

A shift system operated - 6am to 2pm or 2pm to 10pm (with an early stoppage on Fridays). A minibus picked up the early shift girls at 5.30 a.m. They "clocked in" on arrival but didn't have to do this when they finished a shift. She also remembers the random 'stop and search' policy in the factory on exit where around 4 or .5 workers were picked to be searched for stolen cigars/cigarettes. Martha tired of the working regime here and left after 9 months; the extra money wasn't worth the shift-work, the horrible conditions and the lack of sociability. She returned to dental nursing.'

Irene McInnes and the history of Reidvale Housing Association



Mara, our placement student, spoke to Irene McInnes, social activist and lifelong Dennistoun resident and one of the founding members of Reidvale Housing Association.

'Reidvale Housing Association has officially been running since 1975 and holds a huge amount of history for the residents within the area. The organisation came about as a result of the Glasgow District Council wanting to demolish their local

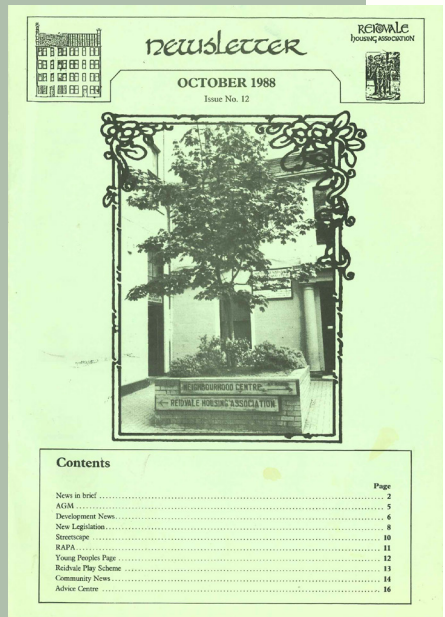
area and move everyone to Easterhouse. I spoke to Irene McInnes, who took a prominent and key part in the setting up of Reidvale and was the first woman Chair of the organisation. Irene recalls the day it all began: "a group of us had not long gotten back from a day trip to Ayr, when we heard that the council had called a public meeting. Once we arrived, we were immediately told about their plans to demolish our homes and get rid of everyone. I remember big John (Butterly) standing up and telling the council that 'if you think Easterhouse is so great, you can move there - because we're not leaving!' And from that day onwards, that was it. Other residents from these tenements joined forces and worked together to establish one of the first community led housing associations within Scotland. The group, consisting of John Butterly, Irene McInnes, Harriet Stonboli, Linda Scott, and other residents of Bathgate Street in Reidvale, got themselves the nickname "Bathgate Street mafia" as they were known for getting the job done!

The first office space the association took up at 143 Bellfield Street was a flat shared with a local senior citizens club, which meant staff had to leave the office whenever the group were needing to get in to play bingo. This speaks volumes in terms of how home-grown and community based the group were. When looking towards the amount of work achieved and how the local area was transformed, we can see they were also determined.

When the first show flat at 93 Reidvale Street was ready, an open day was held, to allow community members to come in and see the future potential of their own properties. A key strategy for the flats to be transformed and avoid demolition or other council planning issues, was that local people were invited to sell their flats to the Association and then have them rented back. The group understood how big an ask this was, but also recognised how essential it was for the community. Irene was one of the few who went around and spoke to community members at their homes, taking the time to explain the process and why

this was the plan. Because she wasn't a stranger and the community knew Irene and the others, they trusted her, and it worked. Over their first 20-year period, Reidvale Housing association rehabilitated and rebuilt 1000 flats, with no resident being moved further than a few hundred metres (or not at all) from their original flat.

Along with including their neighbours and the community within their vision for Reidvale, they set to work and focused on changing the accepted view of the area, wanting the rest of the city to recognise how much of a home the Reidvale community is to its residents. Some of the changes made consisted of tiling closes, installing closed entry systems, and undertaking streetscaping works.



Opposite: Irene McInnes | Credit: Photograph © Tim Morozzo
 Above: Reidvale Housing Association newsletter, 1988 | Credit: GWL

To help improve the physical appearance of the tenements, stone cleaning of the building's exterior was completed. This was done against council's advice as they deemed it as an unnecessary luxury due to it "not being a repair but a cosmetic change". However, the group knew what was best for their community so carried on regardless, and then proceeded to invite politicians and council workers, who had been previously against the work, to the openings of the new buildings. After this, stone cleaning became an eligible cost.

The ethos of the work put into and achieved by Reidvale Housing Association was summed up perfectly by Irene; "it's not just bricks and mortar to us, we wanted to create high quality, affordable housing and provide services that give people the option to stay here from when they're children until they grow old".

Irene was also instrumental in saving Dennistoun's Thomson Street school building. This school was founded in 1875 and after just over a hundred years it was sadly set to be demolished in 1982. However, when this news came to light, Irene said parents with children attending the school "were simply not having it". Both her daughters were attending the school at the time it was set to come down, there was mass concern from all parents. They didn't want their children to be moved from the school and their friends and there were serious issues about traffic and road safety for their children to be able to reach one of the alternative schools. Thompson Street was also a hub for clubs and events outwith schooling times. Irene and other volunteers used to run play schemes from there every year, with over a hundred kids attending throughout summer.



Above: Plaque commemorating Thomson Street School | Credit: Permission from Irene McInnes
Opposite: Irene at Thomson Street School | Credit: Permission from Irene McInnes

The community turned up in force to march from Dennistoun to George Square to protest against the destruction of the school, with the children all wearing white masks to symbolise the way in which they felt the council's decision at this time reflected the way councillors saw Dennistoun residents as the "faceless children of the East End". Irene remembered that on the day: "we stood in George Square and chanted for as long as we could, to make as much noise as possible so the children were heard". After this, Reidvale Housing association decided to arrange a feasibility study to be carried out on the school and after completion the building was deemed completely safe and suitable to use. However, the council still argued there weren't enough children for the school to be kept open financially speaking, but the parents and communities' efforts in campaigning managed to successfully keep the school open for a further eighteen months before Thomson Street's doors were closed permanently. With the demolition costs coming to around £50,000 for the council, Reidvale Housing Association managed to purchase the building for the mere cost of a £1, along with the responsibility of covering the fees if the building is to ever come down in future. After renovation, Thomson Street School now homes nineteen flats for the community and one of those now belongs to Irene and her husband Tommy. She describes it as a "full circle moment" as both Irene and Tommy and their daughters went to primary school at Thomson Street.



The most recent chapter of Reidvale Housing Association has involved a transferring process to an England-based company called Places for People, which also operates in Edinburgh under the name Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association. As always, the tenants will have the final say. If they vote in favour, the transfer will commence in spring 2024.'

Whitevale baths

Women's lives at the beginning of the twentieth century involved a great deal of housework, of which laundry was one of the heaviest tasks. With the rapid expansion of urban populations in the late nineteenth century, living conditions were cramped and unsanitary with washing facilities limited or sometimes non-existent. Public baths with steamies therefore became an important social hub. Whitevale Baths first opened its doors in 1902. The new facility had separate men's and women's swimming pools, hot baths and showers and a "steamie" wash-house with sixty-six washing stalls in the wash-house, which could be hired for tuppence (less than 1p) per hour. Steamies were a major meeting place for women in the community.



The building also hosted a Turkish bath, gymnasium and reading room. The pools and steamie buildings were demolished in the mid-2010s, but some of the original building remains and you can see original photographs in some of the window arches of women doing their laundry in the Whitevale steamie.

The building was closed in the 1980s, but there is some hope that the now derelict building might serve a new important role for the Dennistoun community. Glasgow Building Preservation Trust are working with PEEK Project and Glasgow City Council to investigate if the building can be repaired and upgraded for use by the community.

All images: Exterior of the now derelict Whitevale Baths building, with historic pictures from its past on the closed up window arches | Credit: GWL

'My mother-in-law gave me my first steamie pram. It had a lower part on it that allowed you to put a baby's bath on top of it, powder, scrubber and washing board. Then you would pile all the family's dirty washing on top ... then off to the steamie!...It was a life's experience going to the steamie. Everybody knew everybody and all about each other's lives.'

'I enjoyed going to the steamie ... loved helping my ... mum ...she had an old pram she would put the wash in ... We lived in Duke Street and the steamie was at the Bottom of Bluevale Street.'

'I remember going to this Steamie with my mum in the early '80s'



Other stories and memories

Catherine spoke to Martha who grew up in Dennistoun and Doreen spoke to her family about their own and older relatives' memories of living in Dennistoun:

Martha was born in Dennistoun and lived on Inglis Street as a child with her parents and 3 siblings. They lived in a room and kitchen which she said was obviously very tight for space. They shared the outside toilet on the stair landing with the other flats on the close. She remembers the toilet paper being small squares of newspaper hanging on a hook before Izal toilet tissue was introduced. She attended St Ann's Primary school then Our Lady and St Frances (a girls' school) in Charlotte Street.

She didn't enjoy secondary school and left at 16, despite being bright academically. She has fond memories of living in Dennistoun: going to Whitevale Baths, helping her mum in the steamie, going the messages to local shops, getting fish suppers at Margaret's chip shop or Coia's, going to the Scotia cinema and rollerskating at Rollerena.

'Ina lived on Craigpark Drive ... Jean lived on Onslow Square ... Elizabeth remembers the cigarette factory - they called it the "red factory"...Elizabeth remembers that Ina would give her a bowl to go and get ice-cream from the Italian ice-cream shop and their collie dog would "take her for a run down Whitehill Street" to get there!'

Above right: Notes about Doreen's stories and memories of her family's life in Dennistoun made on a napkin during a family dinner!
Credit: GWL

Right: One of Dennistoun's Scottish/Italian cafés on Duke St. | Credit: GWL



Ina Boyce. Cragpark Drive

Died 1970?

Jean Rogers

Dead 1964?

Onslow Square

Communicate through wall

Bedroom - Living room

Terrace Houses

Back Court

Red Factory W/D+H) Wills

Ciglo Cig. Factory

Bins & clothes poles

Ina = collie dog ^{would take both} Elizabeth a run down

Aunt down Whitehill street

Take Ina gave Elizabeth a bowl to go and get ice cream from

Italian Ice cream shop

COIA'S CAFE

DELICATESSEN ESTABLISHED 1928 - ARTISAN MEATS - FRESH BREADS

FISH & CHIPS

BREAKFAST CHAMPIONS LUNCH & AFTERNOON A LA CART

TRADITIONAL

COIA'S

COIA'S

FINE WINE - CHAMPAGNE



The Crown Creighton Pub

Mara researched the Crown Creighton pub, scene of the *Daily Record* article we found at the Mitchell Library.

'Up until the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 was in place, pubs in the UK were considered "men only" premises. This was mostly the case in Dennistoun too. Tommy Keiran of the Crown Creighton pub (476-480 Duke Street), reflected on elements of this time during an interview with the Dennistoun Conservation

Society: "Ladies were taboo in a pub back then. I used to let some customers' wives come in and a few times the police would stop by asking what the women were doing in the bar, I would just tell them they were here to collect their husbands". He recalls the day the law came into action, and the headlines this made for his pub in particular: "It was a bank holiday Monday, the pub was heaving but I had my brother helping cover the bar, so I was able to head out. As I was leaving, I noticed a young woman standing with long blonde hair and a big fancy jacket on, drinking at the bar and surrounded by all my usual customers, along with a photographer. I didn't think much of it so carried on back home.

The phone goes as soon as I get in and it's my brother telling me that the *Daily Record* is in, 'it's women's liberation day' he says, 'we can no longer refuse women coming into the bar.'"

Above: The Crown Creighton pub today (the *Daily Record* article is framed and displayed proudly on the wall) | Credit: GWL

Opposite: 1975 article from the *Daily Record* about the Crown Pub (now the Crown Creighton) | Credit: *Daily Record*, 30 Dec 1975. Reach plc. (image taken by project team at the Mitchell library)

It's a woman's world

So Liz Crowns it with a pint

THE toast was "Equality!"—and Liz Wilson sank a pint to prove it.

The 20-year-old blonde was standing at the bar of the Crown in Dennistoun, Glasgow.

It used to be an all-male pub ... until yesterday, when the Sex Discrimination Act came into force.

Even Tennents in Byres Road, Hillhead, fell when 13 women's libbers walked in ... but only after barstaff called the police for advice and were told: "Let them in."

Catch

The girls, led by Eveline Hunter of the Glasgow Women's Liberation group, went on to storm the last of Glasgow's male bar bastions at the Bay Horse in Bath Street and the Imperial in Howard Street.

And they were told everywhere they went that they were welcome to stay ... for

The next day the Daily Record posted an article "It's a Women's World ... So Liz Crowns it with a pint" and photographed was the woman (Liz Wilson, model) that Tommy had seen the previous day in the pub. I spoke to Frances Kieran about the story. After this, a loophole that some premises were able to still work around was not having any facilities for women to use. Frances shares a story of women in the Crown getting men to stand outside the male toilets while women used them, forcing the facilities to be shared. Licensing laws however did put pressure on pubs to install facilities for ladies to use otherwise future applications of renewing their drinking licensing could be denied. The Crown installed facilities for women within the same year.

New Dennistoun

Dennistoun is changing and there are now many new communities opening businesses and making their homes there. We spoke to Lewa Thomas, the owner of Akara Bakery on Duke Street, who also now lives in Dennistoun.



Lewa was brought up in the West End of Glasgow but she has had a long connection to Dennistoun through her church which is based there and she is now a Dennistoun resident. Lewa started her bakery business making and selling cakes in her mother's kitchen and opened Akara in 2019, just a few months before the Covid crisis. She quickly began focusing on cakes and takeaway so that the business survived lockdown and Akara is now thriving. Lewa hopes that she may expand in the future to open other bakeries. We asked Lewa if she had a woman who was a role model for her and she said without hesitation:

Above: Lewa Thomas being interviewed at Glasgow Women's Library | Credit: GWL

Opposite: Nikki and Stef chatting to people at the Alexandra Park festival | Credit: GWL

'My mother. I really respect her experience and she brought me up to not see limitations to my own potential and to never let barriers stand in my way.'

One of Lewa's favourite things about Dennistoun is that people are really friendly and chatty: *'New and old communities in Dennistoun get on well. People want to make connections in their community here and are passionate about keeping the spirit of Dennistoun alive.'*



I've enjoyed finding out about Dennistoun's history about which I knew very little. It's also been interesting to see how much work is needed to prepare a booklet. I really enjoyed our trip to the Resources Centre at Nitshill. It's an amazing place with so much in it! I could have spent a week there. Sadly, I learned I am not very skillful at drawing and painting etc

I know Jean Wright, who's 102, lived in Dennistoun all her life. She helped with the Brownies and Guides.

Was it Rollerena or Rollerama???

playing in the streets and getting bathed in the kitchen sink!

I don't know many women in Dennistoun ... but I would love to find out more about women in the community..especially the Housing Association!




a ...
community hero! She
has the biggest heart for the
community and the people of
Dennistoun

Lulu
is an inspirational
and wonderful artist with a
beautiful and impactful
voice.


I feel
inspired, excited to
research and learn more
and to meet new women
locally.



I really
enjoyed seeing the stuff
from the Women's Library archive. I
can't believe there's the whole story of one
Dennistoun working class family there. I've never
done history before, but I want to make a
family tree and find out more about
their story.




This has been great. I feel inspired and excited to learn more. I feel more connected.



I really enjoyed the sessions I was able to get to. My increasing lack of mobility and energy meant I was unable to go to all the sessions. I enjoyed using (and stretching) my creativity to make a Dennistoun Dynamo can of Wendy Wood and to draw my representation of the nightdress the women were made to sew whilst imprisoned. Also this project meant my husband, his brother and I learned a wee bit extra about my mother-in-law's family history during a family dinner for her birthday.



I've just moved here and want to meet more people locally.



I just feel more connected, inspired about local history – and more knowledgeable about local heritage.

Name..... Eleanor Stewart
Wendy Wood *Wendy Wood*

Date/year of birth..... 1889

What is her connection to Dennistoun?.....
Born in Dennistoun

Why does this woman deserve to be remembered?.....

*She was a trade unionist + labour activist + involved in organising the workers union. She was the first Labour woman to be elected to Glasgow city Council 😊
A true champion of rights for workers + women*

Clockwise from top left: Creating cards about Dennistoun women at a project open day; Creating cards about Dennistoun at the Alexandra Park festival; We asked folk to write about Dennistoun women they thought should be remembered; Creating our group collage of the project at Culloden Street Hall; Adding final touches to the Dennistoun group collage; creating self portraits | Credit: GWL

Acknowledgements:

We spoke to many people and read many publications and websites to gather the information for this booklet:

- allgeographynow.wordpress.com/2016/02/24/tenement-life-in-glasgow
- archivisthistoryblog.wordpress.com/2020/05/10/the-dennistoun-palais/
- cain.ulster.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch1800-1967
- Community-led Housing Supporting a Sustainable Future, TheyWorkForYou: 27 Apr 2023: Scottish Parliament debates - TheyWorkForYou
- Cullen, Conway, and Mullen family archives; Glasgow Women's library archives
- crowhousekitchen.wordpress.com/2014/06/27/scots-women-of-history-2-wendy-wood
- Dennistoun Conservation Society, Oral History Project; Tommy Keiran (owner of Crown Creighton pub), accessed via Mitchell Library archives
- Dennistoun Library; (Glasgow Life exhibition and display)
- @DennistounStyle
- From Glasgow's Treasure Chest; James Cowan, (The Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library)
- The Glasgow Almanac; Stephen Terry,(Neil Wilson publishing, 2010)
- Glasgow's East End Through Time; Gordon Adams (The Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library)
- Going to the Palais: A Social And Cultural History of Dancing and Dance Halls in Britain, 1918–1960; (Oxford Academic), <https://academic.oup.com/book/9479>
- Handbook of Glasgow Public Libraries; (1907, Mitchell Library)
- Hawkers and Back Court Singers – memories of growing up in the Gorbals; (publ. Glasgow Life)
- "It's a Women's World... So Liz Crowns it with a pint", Daily Record article, December 1975, accessed via Mitchell Library archives
- nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/womens-land-army/
- projects.handsupfortrad.scot/handsupfortrad

- Reidvale Housing Association: The First 25 Years; Reidvale Housing Association
- Revelations of a Rejected Soprano; Dorothy Paul, (Mainstream Publishing)
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975; the National Archives, accessed via Sex Discrimination Act, 1975
- Tales Fae the East podcast (Tales fae the East - A podcast project based in Glasgow's East end (tales-fae-the-east.com))
- www.dennistoun.co.uk
- www.facebook.com/GlasgowMemories
- www.theglasgowstory.com
- www.ghostdance.us
- www.lakotatimes.com
- www.wealothianwomensforum.org.uk/EdinburghWomen
- www.womenslandarmy.co.uk
- 90th anniversary of Dennistoun Library: a walk down memory lane; Dennistoun Library compilation

Thanks are due to the following:

Kathy Aplan; Shane Balkowitsch; Eloise Birtwhistle; Eileen Conway; the Cullen, Conway and Mullan families; The Glasgow Golden Generations Group, Battlefield; Glasgow Museums Resource Centre; Fiona Hayes, Curator, Social History, Glasgow Museums; Mara Hadden; Ruth Johnston, Dennistoun Conservation Society; Frances Kieran, Crown Creighton Pub; the family of Marcella LeBeau; Rosi Mele, Lingo Flamingo; Beverly McFarlane; Irene McInnes; Heather Middleton; Milnbank Housing Association; Alasdair Satchel and Tim Morozzo from Tales Fae the East podcast; Jim Schaap; Evlynn and Christina Sharp; Clare Thompson, Librarian, Special Collections, Mitchell Library and Alan Wylie.

Special thanks are due to the women who have been part of the project group over the past year:

Ailsa Anderson; Carole Armour; Eloise Bishop; Alexandra Compton; India Divers; Stef Donini; Elaine Fegan; Anna Forrest; Kate Grimshaw; Doreen Kelly; Nicky Leathard; Becca Lewis; Catherine Mackie; Lesley McNicol; Evlynn Sharp and Bella Ozuna.



**GLASGOW
WOMEN'S
LIBRARY**

