



All Roads lead to Allen Lithographic



It was always the intention to include in the project a shop or retailer who had a long and distinguished association with Kirkcaldy. Our choice fell on one of Kirkcaldy's outstanding commercial and retail names – *Allen Lithographic*. This firm, in one guise or another, commenced business in Church Lane/Townsend Place in 1877 and became a bastion and byword for high quality printing carried out by a team at the cutting edge of improvements to the processes. In many respects this is very much a local story and also, without question, a family story. It also produces a question – if the Allen Lithographic Company was formed in 1900 why did it celebrate its centenary in 1967? Can we find the answer?

Do not think for one moment that Allen Lithographic was restricted to what we might term traditional printing. The firm were far more than that. They grew up almost in tandem with Kirkcaldy's greatest and best known industries – linoleum and floorcloth.

The debt that Kirkcaldy is due to Michael Nairn and those who followed him can never be overstated. In the 1870s as linoleum grew from the earlier floorcloth industry so the quality and the range of designs offered also improved. This was soon seen in the need for the firm's salesmen to be equipped with what is nowadays termed sample books. The company which became Allen Lithographic were in at the very start of linoleum's growth and through time were printing linoleum patterns for most/many of the country's manufacturers. However, the story is perhaps getting a little ahead of itself – so it is best to start at the most sensible place – the beginning. It takes us on a journey from the very seeds of the industry through to the foundation of Allen Lithographic.

What is Lithography?

Strange to relate the inventor of lithography was not a printer but a German actor/playwright by the name of Alois Senefelder. He was training to be a lawyer when that was derailed by the death of his father in 1791. This led him having to abandon his studies to support his mother and eight siblings. This he did by becoming an actor and writing a successful play – *Connoisseur of Girls*.

However, he incurred problems with printing another play – *Mathilde von Altenstein* – this placed him in debt and the knock-on effect was that he had inadequate funds to publish another play. He was obviously a man of both ability and ingenuity. He set about trying to discover a way of doing his own printing. He experimented with an etching technique and discovered that by using an acid resisting ink on a smooth fine grained stone he could print from the flat surface of the stone. The stone used was solenhofen limestone. Remarkably, he had invented the first planographic process in printing!

Alois refined the process calling it “stone printing” or “chemical printing”. He had found his place in history and started a publishing firm in 1796 with his new cheap process. Despite his choice of name – that was soon superseded by “lithography” - *lithos* from the Greek meaning a stone and *graphein*, again from the Greek, meaning to write. This was eminently sensible given it was writing directly onto a stone. He secured patent rights all over Europe and by 1837 the process had been further enhanced to allow full colour printing.

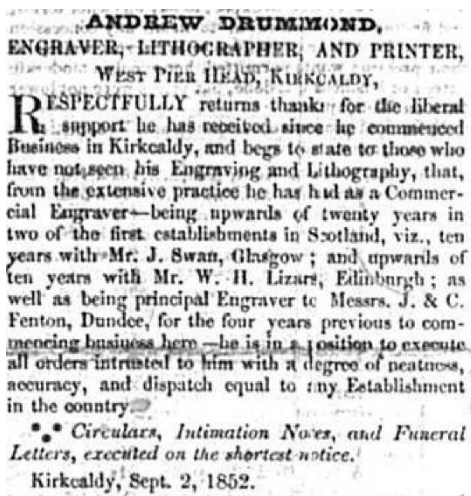
It is suggested that the first lithographer in Scotland was a Mr Robertson who operated from premises in Edinburgh around 1820. All our research could uncover came to very little and certainly nothing from these early days. What was unearthed were possible references to descendants of the pioneer but that is by no means certain. There had been a confidence that something more substantial would be uncovered but all our findings, such as they are, came from the *Edinburgh Evening News*:-

- The 12th January 1893 mentioned a boating accident at Portobello, Three men had gone fishing when the boat capsized. An Alexander Thomson drowned but his two companions were rescued – a John Buchanan and a James Robertson – both were lithographic printers.
- The 11th September 1905 made mention of a meeting to form a branch of the Scottish Workers Representation Committee. One of the members appointed to the executive was “Mr Robertson, Lithographic Printer”.
- The 12th January 1934 made mention of the death of Mary McLean – the widow of Alexander Robertson, Lithographic Printer.

That does not seem to be a great deal of material on the man/company who allegedly brought this printing process to Scotland. Perhaps we were looking in the wrong place!

It was not until 1851 that an Andrew Drummond set up business in Kirkcaldy as a lithographer and engraver. He is normally credited with being the first lithographer in the town. He had previous experience in engraving in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee. Some research resulted in uncovering an advertisement in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 4th September 1852. It would seem from the wording that he was already in Kirkcaldy as he gives

thanks for the liberal support he has received since coming to Kirkcaldy. His experience is listed as being 10 years with Mr Swan of Glasgow, followed by 10 years with W.H. Lizars of Edinburgh. He then spent 4 years in Dundee with Messrs. J. & C. Fenton before arriving in Kirkcaldy. The advertisement which is reproduced here indicates that he was operating from the West Pier Head. In 1856 he had moved westwards to premises on the High Street where no address is given but was opposite Oswald's Wynd. This information was extracted



ANDREW DRUMMOND,
ENGRAVER, LITHOGRAPHER, AND PRINTER,
WEST PIER HEAD, KIRKCALDY.

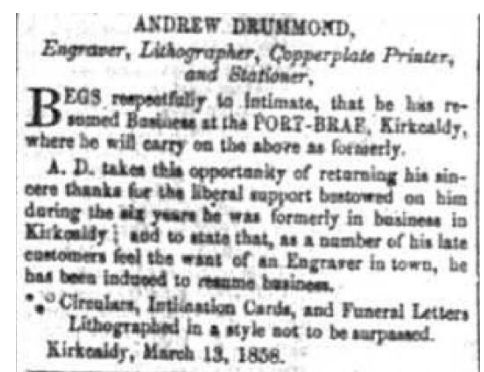
RESPECTFULLY returns thanks for the liberal support he has received since he commenced business in Kirkcaldy, and begs to state to those who have not seen his Engraving and Lithography, that, from the extensive practice he has had as a Commercial Engraver—being upwards of twenty years in two of the first establishments in Scotland, viz., ten years with Mr. J. Swan, Glasgow; and upwards of ten years with Mr. W. H. Lizars, Edinburgh; as well as being principal Engraver to Messrs. J. & C. Fenton, Dundee, for the four years previous to commencing business here—he is in a position to execute all orders entrusted to him with a degree of neatness, accuracy, and dispatch equal to any Establishment in the country.

* * * Circulars, Intimation Notes, and Funeral Letters, executed on the shortest notice.

Kirkcaldy, Sept. 2, 1852.

from the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 1st November that year. On the 25th April 1857 the *Fifeshire Advertiser* reported that he sold his business to John Crawford.

Drummond next surfaced in Stirling advertising himself as an “Engraver, Lithographic and Copper Plate printer”. However, that was not the end of him and Kirkcaldy because, in March 1858, the *Fifeshire Advertiser* was able to carry an announcement that he was returning to the town and would be operating from the Port Brae – the reason for his return was given as “ he was induced to resume business as a number of his late customers felt the want of an engraver in town”.



ANDREW DRUMMOND,
Engraver, Lithographer, Copperplate Printer,
and Stationer.

BEGS respectfully to intimate, that he has resumed business at the PORT-BRAE, Kirkcaldy, where he will carry on the above as formerly.

A. D. takes this opportunity of returning his sincere thanks for the liberal support bestowed on him during the six years he was formerly in business in Kirkcaldy; and to state that, as a number of his late customers feel the want of an Engraver in town, he has been induced to resume business.

* * * Circulars, Intimation Cards, and Funeral Letters
Lithographed in a style not to be surpassed.

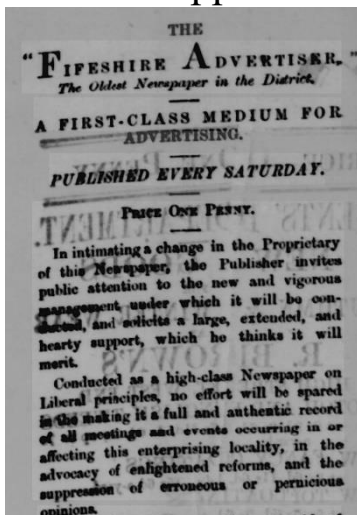
Kirkcaldy, March 13, 1858.

In all honesty at this point we should move on to John Crawford but sometimes items of significant interest surface and demand inclusion. We will take some time to look at the Bryson family who until now have evaded

our radar.

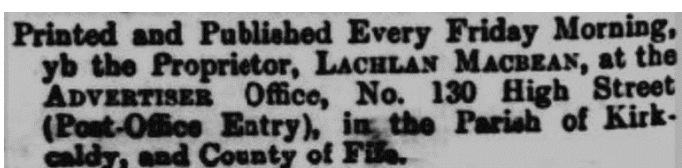
Robert Bryson was born in Cupar in 1802 and came to Kirkcaldy in 1825 where he opened a business as a bookseller and bookbinder at 189 High Street. He ran the business until his early death on the 16th March 1848. The notice in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* indicated that he died after a lingering illness of 8 months duration. He had no sooner arrived in the town than he married a Helen Kennedy on the 17th October 1825. Without question Helen was involved in the business as the 1851 Census showed her as a bookseller. She died in Kirkcaldy on the 17th October 1875 aged 76. The couple had 7 children who reached maturity. The family taken from the 1851 census were

- **Jessie** – born 1826 and died on 21/03/1905. Jessie worked in the family business.
- **Eliza** – born in 1828 and died on the 11th October 1906. Despite the obvious age difference, Eliza was an intimate friend of Pet Marjorie's mother – Isabella Fleming. It was said that she was instrumental in ensuring Marjorie's name appeared in print.
- **Robert Bryson** – born in 1830 and died on the 1st August 1906. Robert trained as a bookbinder but, in 1854, joined the Post Office. In 1861 he was promoted to the position of *Postmaster of Kirkcaldy* until his retiral in 1895.
- **William Bryson** – born in 1835 and dying on the 19th July 1910. He followed his brother into the Post Office.
- **John Bryson** – born 1838 and died in 1890 which is perhaps not a surprise given the conditions he endured while serving in the army. He appeared as an apprentice bookbinder in the 1851 Census but what



was termed as “war fever” gripped him and he ran away from home to join up. After 3 month's drill he was sent to the Crimea. He spend two winters in the trenches and was involved in the siege of Sevastopol. After the end of the war he returned to Kirkcaldy in poor health. He took responsibility, along with brother Alexander and sister Jessie, for running the bookselling, bookbinding and printing outlet at 132 High Street. However, in 1877 on the 15th September – *The Fifeshire Advertiser* announced a new owner – none other than John Bryson. Readers were assured that the paper was under new and vigorous

management and would be a high class newspaper based on Liberal principles. A feature of the new style would be that “by the lively and proper discussion of local topics, by numerous fresh and racy contributions, by a newly organised system of correspondence and by a careful selection of general news, it is hoped that the prestige to which its founder raised it would be successfully maintained”. The newspaper office was moved to 130 High Street. A master-stroke was unveiled when, in 1877, he brought Lachlan Macbean to Kirkcaldy to assist him with the production of the newspaper. Macbean was a man who left his imprint on Kirkcaldy in so many ways leaving an indelible mark on the town. It has to be asked if Eliza Bryson might have been instrumental in encouraging McBean to write his book on Pet Marjorie? For interest the details of ownership of the newspaper taken from the copy of the 19th April 1889 is reproduced here showing MacBean taking the reins, the newspaper. On the death of John Bryson – Lachlan Macbean assumed control of the paper acting as proprietor and editor for close to 40 years. If the Bryson family did nothing else – bringing Lachlan MacBean to Kirkcaldy was sufficient!



Printed and Published Every Friday Morning,
by the Proprietor, LACHLAN MACBEAN, at the
ADVERTISER Office, No. 130 High Street
(Post-Office Entry), in the Parish of Kirk-
caldy, and County of Fife.

- **Alexander** – born 1842 and dying on the 7th March 1886. This son remained in the business running it in tandem with brother John and sister Jessie. He was the first of the trio to pass away. He died at his residence, 32 Townend Place, after what was termed a long illness. He had almost a lifetime's connection with the 5th Fife Artillery Volunteers where he was considered a crack shot. This is supported by the fact he won *Captain Aytoun's Medal* for carbine shooting in 1882. From his obituary in the *Fife Advertiser* of the 13th March 1886, we learn that Mr Bryson spent some time in New Zealand where his military instincts saw him involved in what was termed the Maori Wars. During a long march one of his comrades fell out “thoroughly exhausted and unable to continue”. The officer decided the party could not be delayed and the man had to be left to his fate. Bryson said that he would stay with the man and hopefully catch up with the column. “How Mr Bryson managed to find his way through the pathless scrub and to support his colleague in the long hours that followed no one knows, but certain it is that he succeeded at last in bringing him to the

camp, to the surprise and delight of his comrades, who never expected to see the face of either of them again”. On Alexander's death the family asked for a private funeral otherwise the Volunteers would have arranged a full military burial. It was a surprise to learn that his widow Barbara McLeod died in Ontario on the 11th August 1920. That was solved when research showed that her son, Angus McLeod Bryson, had been appointed as manager of the Royal Bank of Canada in Otterville, Ontario. He had been trained in the Bank of Scotland in Kirkcaldy.

- **George Smith Bryson** – born 1844 and died on the 6th July 1895. This son was destined for banking and appears to have had no connection with the family business. He trained under Henry Beveridge in the National Bank in Kirkcaldy (now Eloise/Costa). He served in various branches before returning to Kirkcaldy to the National Bank branch in Pathhead. His twin loves were travelling and music. With the former he often gave lectures on his travels and in the case of the latter he had strong connections with both the town's Music and Orchestral Societies. A move to Falkirk followed in 1893 but an illness laid him low and he died in Kirkcaldy. He was a Justice of the Peace for Fifeshire and a Sheriff Substitute in Stirling.

However, in terms of lithography it is the mother, Helen Bryson, who was taking the lead. In 1835 Robert Bryson, bookbinder and stationer, was based at 189 High Street but at some point had moved to 132. This is currently the shop occupied by Holland & Barratt and of course in 1811 Pet Marjorie and her parents lived upstairs at 130. Mrs Bryson was certainly not someone to

let the grass grow under her feet and in 1857 she moved to 189 High Street, on her own account, to carry on lithographic and copper plate printing. In the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 9th May 1857 it was announced that in addition to her previous machinery she has introduced a powerful copper plate press. By this stage Drummond had left Kirkcaldy leaving the town with no engraver. The article mentioned above also added that “she had made arrangements with a first-class engraver, whereby all orders will be executed in the finest style”. It is suspected that the engraver would have been based in Edinburgh.

LITHOGRAPHIC AND COPPER-PLATE
PRINTING.

MRS. ROBERT BRYSON begs most respectfully to announce, to her friends and the public, that, having taken separate premises for the carrying on the above Department of her Business, she is now in a position to execute, with promptitude and despatch, and at moderate prices, any orders for Invoices, Circulars, Calling Cards, Labels, Mill Tickets, Letter Headings, Funeral Letters, &c. &c., with which she may be entrusted.

In addition to her previous machinery, she has introduced a powerful Copper-Plate Press on the most improved principle, whereby increased facilities have been acquired for the execution of orders in a superior style, and in every branch of the Business. As there is now no Engraver in Kirkcaldy, she has made arrangements with a First class Engraver, whereby all orders will be executed in the first style and on the shortest notice.

Mrs. B. would take this opportunity of returning her grateful thanks for the public patronage and support she has received for so many years, and would respectfully intimate, that the other Branches of her Business are still carried on as formerly.

BOOKSELLING, BOOKBINDING, STATIONERY,
AND
LITHOGRAPHIC ESTABLISHMENT,
189, HIGH STREET,
KIRKCALDY.

More change was to come in March 1859. Mrs Bryson was making extensive alterations to 132 High Street and her working machinery was being moved back to those premises. However, where Fone City is today at that time it was the mouth of a close which led to the entrance to 130 and also an extensive garden. The garden contained the offices of the *Fifeshire Advertiser* for many years. It is fairly safe to assume that the bookselling unit was in 132 with the printing contained in the building in the garden. We know that John Bryson moved his recently bought newspaper into that site in 1877 – the year after his mother died. So, we believe that the family lived above the bookshop at 130 with the garden premises having the same number containing the printworks. So why was this alteration required. The answer is found in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 19th March 1859. It transpires that from the increased demand for lithography she had secured the services of an experienced workman and more importantly had purchased the stock of plates and printing materials from Andrew Drummond – as he left Kirkcaldy for a second time. Given Helen was 60 at the time she was not afraid of risk and told the readership that “she is now in a position to execute in a superior style, all orders with which she may be entrusted.

**LITHOGRAPHIC, BOOKSELLING, AND
STATIONERY WAREHOUSE,
132, HIGH STREET, KIRKCALDY.**

MRS. ROBERT BRYSON takes this opportunity of thanking her friends and the public for the liberal support they have so long bestowed upon her, and begs to intimate that, having found it necessary to make considerable alterations on her Premises, which are now completed, her place of Business is re-opened this day. By the additional accommodation thus acquired, she will be enabled to keep a much larger and better assorted Stock.

From the increased demand for LITHOGRAPHY, and in order to maintain this Department in greater efficiency, she has secured the services of an experienced Workman, and having also purchased the Stock of Plates and Printing Materials belonging to Mr ANDREW DRUMMOND, she is now in a position to execute in a superior style all orders with which she may be entrusted.

Kirkcaldy, March 19, 1859.

Before leaving this quite remarkable family we came upon a notice contained in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 22nd November 1879. In the notice it was pointed out that the Post Office was undergoing extensive alterations and that the public side of the business would be conducted from Mr Bryson's bookshop. A pillar letter box would be erected outside the shop for the duration. The humour comes from the fact that the notice was signed by Robert Bryson – the Postmaster and the beneficiaries were his brothers and sister.

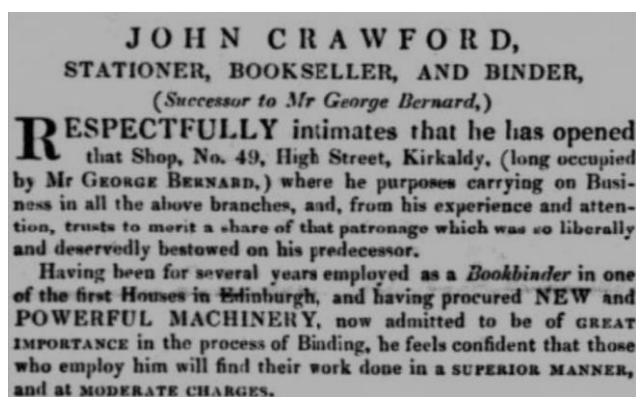
As an aside, some members of the family were still living at 130 High Street in 1906. *The Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 11th October carried the death notice of Eliza showing that address. Further research showed that Jessie Bryson had died on the 21st March 1905 again at 130 High Street. *The Fifeshire*

Advertiser of the 25th carried a short article describing her in a quaint way as being “ a typical representative of the intelligent classes in Kirkcaldy in days now passing into the dim past”.

This confirms that the family did live in the former home of the Fleming family. She, like sister Eliza, was “privileged to know the mother and sister of “Pet Marjorie”. Jessie was said to be “kindly, genuine and well informed”. Seems like an epitaph that many would be pleased to have attached to their name.

We can now pick up the main story again after our 'tour' of the Bryson family but keeping in mind that after the Bryson's had left – the house became the first Kirkcaldy Museum.

John Crawford hailed from Portmoak in Kinross-shire, being born there around 1811. In 1825 he began a bookbinding apprenticeship in Kirkcaldy under a George Brodie. However, he moved to Edinburgh to complete his apprenticeship when Brodie was forced to give up his business – due to financial difficulties. By 1883 we are told that he had opened a bookshop in Auchtermuchty which he ran for three years.



JOHN CRAWFORD,
STATIONER, BOOKSELLER, AND BINDER,
(Successor to Mr George Bernard,)
RESPECTFULLY intimates that he has opened
that Shop, No. 49, High Street, Kirkcaldy, (long occupied
by Mr GEORGE BERNARD,) where he purposes carrying on Busi-
ness in all the above branches, and, from his experience and atten-
tion, trusts to merit a share of that patronage which was so liberally
and deservedly bestowed on his predecessor.
Having been for several years employed as a *Bookbinder* in one
of the first Houses in Edinburgh, and having procured NEW and
POWERFUL MACHINERY, now admitted to be of GREAT
IMPORTANCE in the process of Binding, he feels confident that those
who employ him will find their work done in a SUPERIOR MANNER,
and at MODERATE CHARGES.

In 1836 he returned to Kirkcaldy where he took over the bookselling business of George Bernard at 49 High Street. The *Fife Herald* of the 14th January 1836 confirms this and shows that he was a stationer, bookseller and binder. By November of 1847 he had moved to 62 High Street where he was mentioned in the *Scotsman* as the shop in which to order and place

advertisements for that newspaper. His next move was to number 186 High Street which had been the premises of James Birrell – another in the book and printing line.

Exactly when Crawford secured his first printing press is anything but certain but it seems to be around 1851. His earliest works were in fact published elsewhere using a raft of printers:-

- J. Jeffers Wilson of Kirkcaldy – The Fifeshire Advertiser.

- The Fife Sentinel Press of Cupar.
- The Northern Warden office of Dundee.
- Johnstone & Hunter of Edinburgh.

In these early days and in fact for most of his career religion was a strong feature of his published works. These included *The Fife Total Courant* (1839-41) – *Kirkcaldy Religious Publications* (2 series between 1843-1845) – *The Life and Remains of the Rev. Robert Shirra* (1850).

Most certainly he had his own press by 1851 when he began producing *The Kirkcaldy Observer* (1851-52).

It was some years later in May 1857 that, as mentioned above, he purchased Andrew Drummond's business. The stock he purchased consisted of lithographic equipment, copper-plate presses, engravings and printing materials. This was reported in the *Fife Advertiser* of 25th May 1857. It was reported that he had secured the services of a “first class workman” and was able to open the *Kirkcaldy Steam Printing and Lithographic Works* at 201 High Street, Kirkcaldy.

In 1859 Crawford was instrumental in attempting to set up a quality newspaper to rival the *Fife Advertiser*. This was the outcome of a close election in May of that year when Robert Ferguson of Raith (the sitting member) came close to losing his seat to William Vernon Harcourt. Both were Liberals with Harcourt being an Independent Liberal and Ferguson the official candidate. In the aftermath it was felt that the *Fife Advertiser* had been instrumental in securing the seat for Ferguson. The idea of Harcourt's supporters was to set up a rival paper to promote their opinions. Crawford undertook to publish this newspaper to be called *The Kirkcaldy Independent*. The story of the highly charged election campaign between Ferguson and Harcourt is covered in *Object 12 – The Freedom of the Burgh*. The idea came to nothing especially as a new Tory paper by the same name was published in October of 1859 by Samuel Robinson, the owner of Cupar's *Fife Journal*.

In 1861-1862 Crawford published an advertising sheet by the name of *The Fife Circular of Advertisements*. It was described as “A first class medium for all wants – Situations – Servants - Employment – Apprentices – Clerks – Apartments – Let – Sell or Buy”. Special arrangements were made

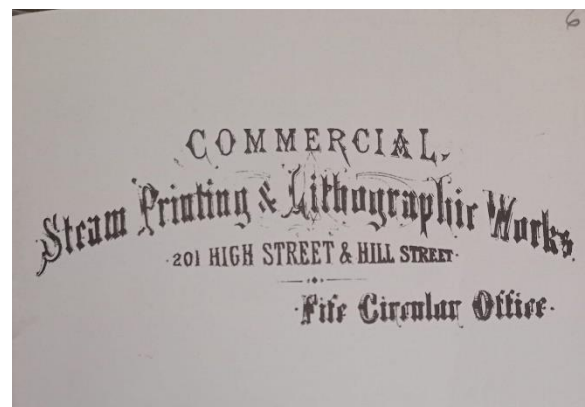
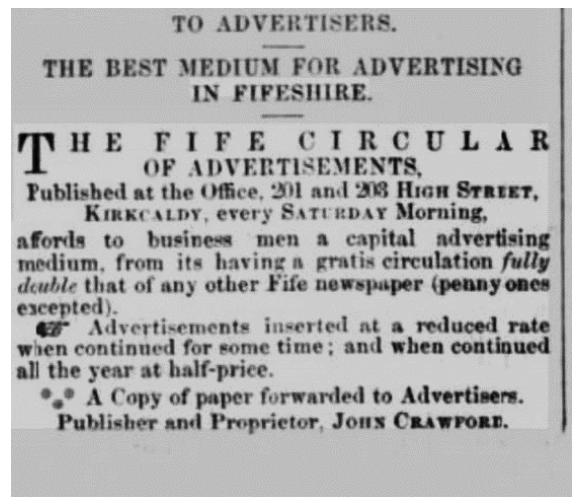
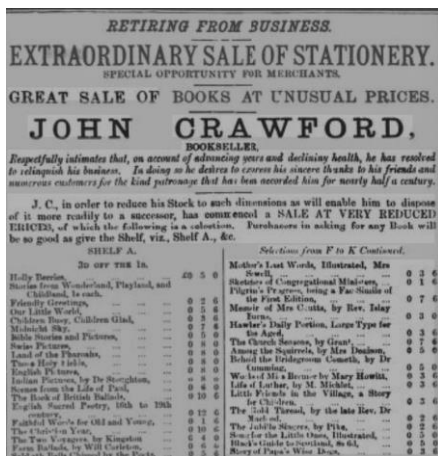
whereby every household in Kirkcaldy, Links and Newtown, received a free copy. There was also a limited delivery in Dysart, Pathhead and Gallatown. A copy of an advertisement for the “best medium for advertising in Fifeshire” which was taken from the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of the 31st July 1861.

Crawford kept going until advancing years and failing health

forced him into retiral in 1881 and a portion of the advertisement indicating his intention is reproduced here. The reductions in the prices to his stock took up two whole columns from the top of the page to the bottom – it certainly seems to have been a substantial business. He left Kirkcaldy to live with a daughter, Julia Thomson, and her husband, Captain William Sinclair Thomson, in Sidcup, Kent. He died on the 31st August 1892. While in Kirkcaldy Crawford was principally a religious publisher and a prominent

Congregationalist. He was a Superintendent of the local Mission School and founded a Children's Church in Thistle Street. He was certainly unlucky in love – he was married four times – his first three wives all passed away between 1838 and 1855!

An amazing find and a labour of love was unearthed in Kirkcaldy's Local Studies Room by the staff. The cover of a catalogue listing all of Crawford's published material is shown here. We take off our hat to whoever compiled it – thought to be an A.J. Campbell.

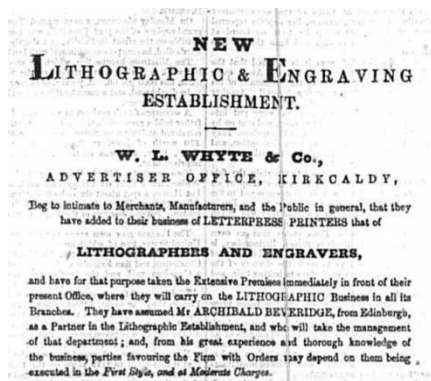


In terms of this story it was in 1858 that he employed Archibald Beveridge as an apprentice. Beveridge went on to become a major figure in the founding of Allen Lithographic – even if it was in some respects by virtue of his ill health and subsequent early death. Make no mistake Beveridge was

an excellent printer and an exceptional businessman. As will be shown he was the catalyst for the founding of Allen Lithographic.

Beveridge was born in East Wemyss in 1845 and, as mentioned above, became an apprentice lithographer. A man who could recognise opportunity he realised the potential of lithography. He must have had exceptional ability in both the process and man management as, in 1863, he was appointed manager of the Edinburgh based printers – Cruickshanks in St. James Square. This appears to be William Cruickshanks, Manufacturing Stationers, at 18 St. James Square.

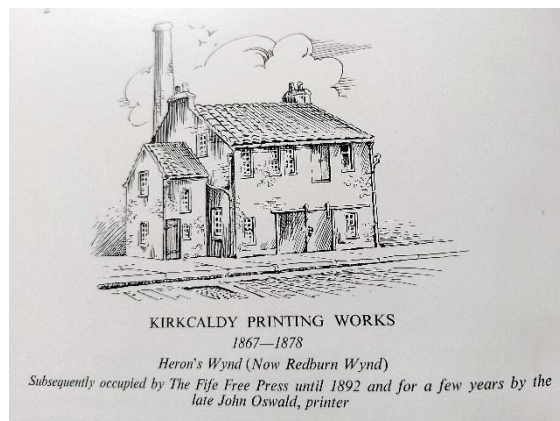
In 1867 he was offered and took the opportunity to return to Kirkcaldy. J. Jeffers Wilson had founded the *Fifeshire Advertiser* in 1838. It seems that in 1867 it was being operated by his nephews William L. Whyte and Francis Hislop. They certainly did not own the paper as we already know that it was sold by Wilson to Bryson in 1877. They had determined to introduce lithography to their activities but needed someone with knowledge and experience.



It was to Archibald Beveridge that they turned. *The Fifeshire Advertiser* of the 15th June carried a notice of the formation of a partnership and it is reproduced here. It most certainly was not long lived as, on the 22nd May 1869, the same newspaper carried a notice of the dissolution of the partnership. While no reason is given it must be likely because as well as running the lithography for the partnership, Beveridge had set up

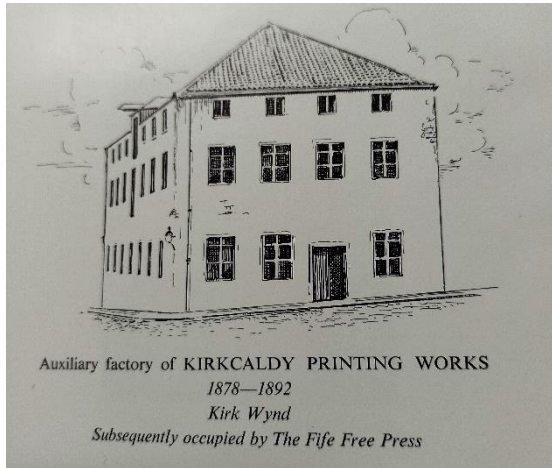
his own letterpress business nearby – conflict of interest?

Beveridge's business premises were situated in Redburn Wynd at its junction with the Sands Road. It was called the Kirkcaldy Printing Works. At this point can we emphasise that Allen Lithographic recognise this 1867 formation of the Kirkcaldy Printing Works as their own formation date. In 1967 when Allen Lithographic celebrated their centenary - it is the sketch shown here which was highlighted in

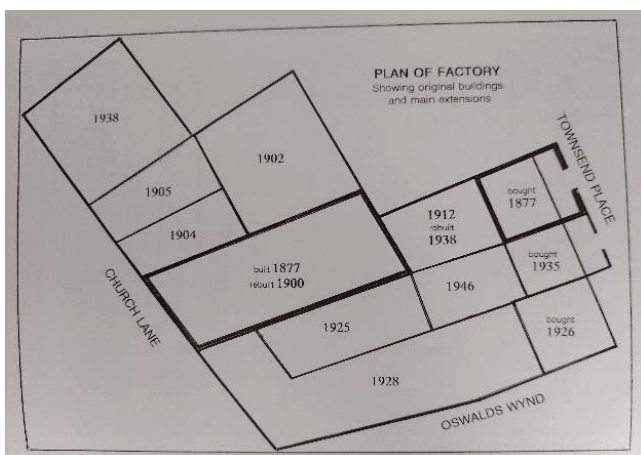


their celebratory article which was carried by the *Fife Free Press* on the 27th May 1967. The sketch mentions that Beveridge was based here until 1878.

The next port of call is still recognisable today when walking down Kirk Wynd. This second home became better known as the long time offices of the Fife Free Press. *The Fife Free Press and Kirkcaldy Guardian* started its life in 1871. The paper was founded by James Strachan and William Greig Livingstone. Livingstone had been a printer with the Fife Free Press. The first premises for the paper were in the Old Corn Exchange in Market Street – so Kirk Wynd was a later move. The sketch which also appeared in the centenary article is shown here – and was a home of the company from 1878 until 1892. It would seem that this building was only one of



the firm's premises as we unearthed a move in the *Fife Free Press* of the 24th November 1877. The article praised Archibald Beveridge for his enterprise in erecting a fine new building off Townsend Place. This was the first step in an expansion which ultimately encompassed all the land between Church Lane and Townsend Place. A map showing the extent of the first site is shown here. Apparently some houses and a market garden had to be demolished to make way for the factory.

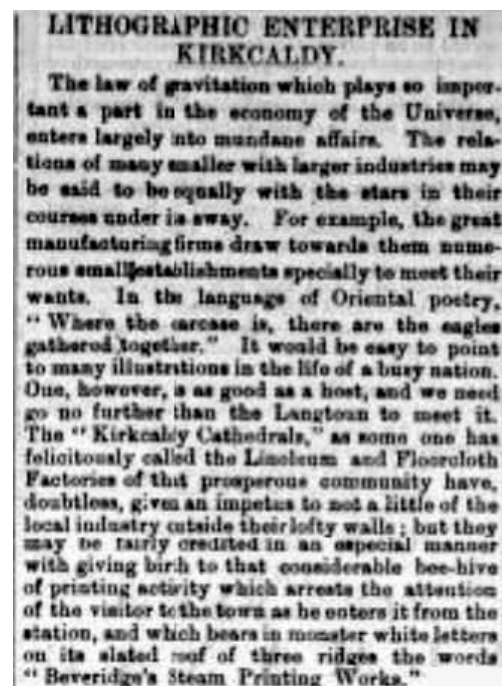


Moving forward temporarily, a sketch taken from J. Harry Allen's excellent 1998 book – *Allen the Lithographers* shows how the constituent elements of the site were eventually woven together and as a comparison to the above the sketch is shown here. It is a useful illustration of how

the site came together between 1877 and 1959.

The Scotsman of the 15th November carried an advertisement for a compositor, presumably for the new site. The wage was £1.25 for a 51 hour week! Returning to the *Fife Free Press* article it carried the following in its body - “we are glad to observe the handsome new building erected off Townsend Place for Mr Archibald Beveridge. The building is on one storey, lighted from the roof and is fitted up with great regard to ventilation and convenience. A corner near the entrance is partitioned off for an artist's room, while at the further end are situated the office and engine rooms. A splendid horizontal 10hp engine serves as the motive power for 12 machines. The machine was manufactured in the local foundry of T. & J. Dale. A wing is being added as a paper store and the house facing Townend Place is being fitted up as an office”.

We trawled through various articles on Mr Beveridge and found one in the *Fife Herald* of the 26th December 1883. It was a substantial article under the heading – **Lithographic Enterprise in Kirkcaldy**. The article was a full one and opened with the weaving together of what was termed “Kirkcaldy's Cathedrals” - the linoleum and floorcloth industry and lithography – in particular Mr Beveridge. It credited the “Cathedrals” as “giving birth to the 'bee hive' of printing activity which arrests the attention of the visitor to the town as they enter it from the station, and which bears in monster white letters on its roof – *Beveridge's Steam Printing Works*. The inference was that with the rapid rise in the linoleum and floorcloth industry – came the hour for an enterprising lithographer to reproduce in facsimile the many intricate and pretty designs of the floorcloth; and with the hour came the man. That man was Archibald Beveridge.



The article lauded Beveridge for his efforts in just a little over 14 years as he had built a business which was second to none in Scotland. It placed much of his success on his complete understanding and mastery of this process where “anything which is written, drawn or printed with ink of a greasy character, may be transferred to a smooth stone and printed from its

surface instead of from type standing out in relief”. Very close to that came his “organising power, indomitable energy and enterprise”.

While the bulk of his work came from the floorcloth industry which was the staple demand there was far more to it than merely floorcloth. Some of the machinery and statistics given here may help paint a picture of how successful this business was. It is not complete, simply enough to give a flavour.

- The original building cost £3000.
- The site contained 17 lithographic machines and presses.
- One machine was said to be the largest in Scotland.
- The stones from which the printing is done weigh half a ton each.
- The site also contained 6 type-printing machines and presses.
- There were several guillotine cutting machines.
- There were machines for bronzing, ruling, perforating, die-stamping and paging etc.
- The motive power was now provided by a 20hp steam engine.
- There were 100 employees.
- The office was connected to the telephone system in which Kirkcaldy itself had 40 numbers – Allen's being number 9.

Some idea of the extensive nature of the work required for the Linoleum and Floorcloth Factories may be gathered from the fact that Mr Beveridge has frequently contracts both from local and English firms for specimen books—varying in amount from £500 to £2000. Trade labels of all kinds of artistic designs, splendid show-cards, and ornamental calendars, are produced by him in endless variety, and in almost fabulous quantities. It is simple truth to say that Mr Beveridge belongs to that inner circle of men of business genius, and enterprise who have made Kirkcaldy in our day so full of industrial activity, and which have carried her name and fame to the ends of the earth.

The article ended with a summing up of the man. At that time, when Kirkcaldy was an industrial powerhouse, it could well have been said of others - *“it is simple truth to say that Mr Beveridge belongs to that inner circle of men of business genius and enterprise who have made Kirkcaldy in our day so full of industrial activity and has carried her name and fame to the ends of the earth”*.

This work ethic must have taken its toll as in his latter years he appointed his foreman, J. Henry Allen, as his manager. In 1892 Archibald Beveridge collapsed at the season's opening of Victoria Bowling Green – he died on the 8th May. *The Kirkcaldy Times* of the 11th May carried an obituary which gave very little more than this research has uncovered. Once again his work with the Linoleum Industry was highlighted and also the remarkable

DEATH OF A KIRKCALDY LITHO-GRAPHER.
The death of Mr Archibald Beveridge, lithographer, Kirkcaldy, is announced. Mr Beveridge, while present at the opening of the Victoria Bowling Green on Wednesday, was struck with paralysis, and never regained consciousness, expiring on Saturday. He was in his 47th year, and is survived by a widow and family. The deceased gentleman occupied a foremost place as a lithographic printer, carrying on an extensive business.

expansion which the firm had undergone in only 14 years.

The point has now been reached where an Allen starts to take centre stage. J. Henry Allen was 37 when Archibald Drummond passed away. Allen's father was a highly respected chemist in Pathhead whose premises were in Mid Street. Although he was known as Dr. George Allen he was not, as is sometimes suggested, a general practitioner, but in fact his degree was in chemistry. The family consisted of 6 boys and 1 girl. Henry had been born in Bedford before the family relocated to Pathhead.

All the children appear in the 1881 Census and they are listed below along with their ages at the time:-

Edith Rosetta	27
John Henry	25
George L.	21
David S.	19
William A.	16
Charles J.	14
Thomas M	12

Henry was born in 1855 and it was in 1868 that he started looking for work. This he found as an apprentice lithographer with Archibald Beveridge where he served his time, became a journeyman, then foreman, then finally Works Manager. The date 1868 tells us that he was with Beveridge from almost the very start until the very end.

George went into the construction industry where in time he was joined by brother Thomas. Research found an Allen Construction Company who specialised in ferro concrete. They were based in Glasgow but they were certainly involved in the construction of Arbroath baths. William was also a lithographer and served his time with Archibald Beveridge. Rather than stay in the trade he moved to the Ordnance Survey in Southampton where in time he was joined by his brother Charles. Charles himself had served an apprenticeship with John Crawford. We simply failed to establish anything on David S. Allen and that included his death which does not appear to have taken place in Scotland.

The death of Archibald Beveridge was a blow both for his employees and the linoleum industry – after all who would do the facsimile printing of the sample books etc? Henry Allen had the knowledge, skill and ability, but not the skill set to look after the accounts and the sales. It was Michael Nairn who hit on a potential solution – his daughter Catherine Ann was engaged to William Black – a director of William Collins, the publishers, and it was Black who introduced Allen to a colleague Roderick Couper. They formed

EDINBURGH, 25th August, 1892

I BEG to inform you that I have disposed of the Lithographic and Printing Business formerly carried on by the late ARCHIBALD BEVERIDGE, at Townsend Place, Kirkcaldy, to Messrs RODERICK COUPER and J. HARRY ALLEN, who will continue to carry on the Business under the style or firm of COUPER & ALLEN. With the greatest confidence, I venture to solicit for the new firm the continuance of your favour, so long and liberally enjoyed by the late ARCHIBALD BEVERIDGE.

Yours faithfully,
 JAMES POLLARD, C.A.,
 Trustee on Estate of the late Archibald Beveridge

REFERRING to the above Notice, we beg to intimate that we shall continue the Business in all its Branches, and all Orders entrusted to us shall receive our careful attention.

COUPER & ALLEN,
 Kirkcaldy, 27th August, 1892.

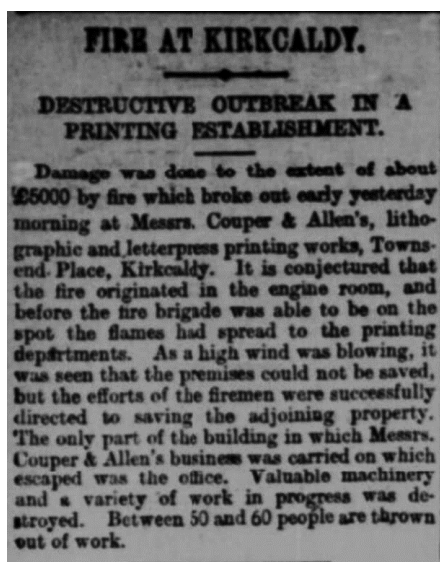
a partnership and bought the business on the 27th August 1892 which was also the year Black and Catherine Ann were married in Collessie. The business was to become known as Couper and Allen. The *Fife Free Press* of the 27th August 1892 carried a joint notice on the purchase. The first part confirmed that James Pollard C.A. of Edinburgh, the Trustee of Archibald Beveridge, had sold the business to the said gentlemen and the second part confirmed the name of the new partnership.

The partnership saw Allen working on the technical side of the business while Roderick Couper was able to increase the customer base and looked after the accounts. The newspapers of the period tended to carry advertisements for employees but one was stumbled upon in the *Fife Free Press* of the 3rd April 1897. The article related to a presentation of an illuminated scroll to Alexander Beattie. Beattie was known as “the grand old man of temperance” having worked tirelessly for the cause of abstention since he signed the pledge in 1838. The scroll commemorated his retiral from the presidency of the *Kirkcaldy Total Abstention Society and Band of Hope*. What is of interest is that the scroll was the work of Couper and Allen and J. Henry Allen was married to Sophie Beattie – the daughter of Alexander.

The above aside gives an opportunity to look at the family of Henry and Sophie – some came to play a major part in the business. There were 5 children in total – they were -

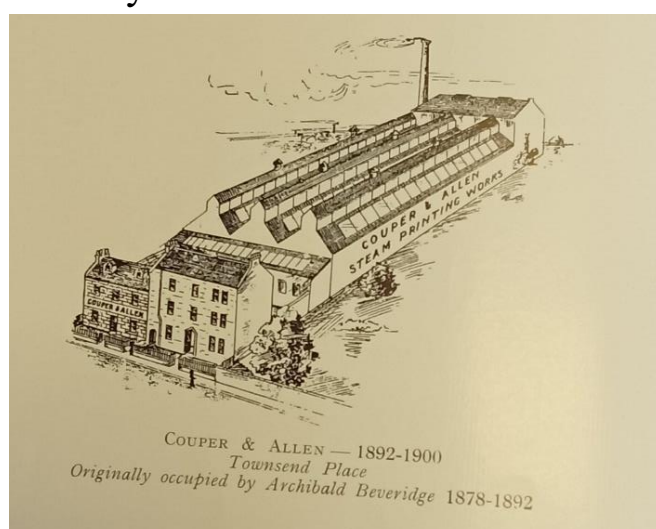
George Cameron Allen.
 Alexander Beattie Allen.
 Sophia Edith Allen.

Elizabeth Christie Allen.
 Louis Allen.



It was on the 16th February 1900 that disaster overtook the firm. A huge fire destroyed almost every building on the site with only the office facing Townend Place still standing. Surprisingly, the fullest item we could find on the fire appeared in the *Daily Record* on the 17th. The report suggested that the fire had apparently started in the engine room and had quickly spread to the printing works. With a high wind blowing it was quickly seen that the building could not be saved and the efforts of the fire brigade were turned to saving the adjoining buildings. The cost of the damage was estimated at £5,000 and only the office was saved – it

appears that thankfully there was a garden separating the office from the works. It was all too much for Roderick Couper and he simply took his share of the insurance monies and left. That well known publication – *Bookseller* – in its edition of the 3rd August 1900 made mention of the dissolution of the partnership. It also mentioned that J.H. Allen would continue and all outstanding accounts should be paid to him.



While that might have been the end of Roderick Couper's business association with the area it did not sever his family connection. The *Fife Free Press* of the 8th October 1927 reported on the death of Gertrude Nairn – the wife of John Nairn of linoleum fame. Mrs Nairn who had been an invalid for many years prior to her death was Roderick Couper's sister. She died at home in Forth Park which for many years was the town's maternity hospital. Their only son, Ian Couper Nairn, was killed in action on the 2nd September 1918. John Nairn subsequently donated both the town's library and museum as part of the War Memorial Gardens.

But John Henry was not to be beaten and again we refer to the centenary article in the *Fife Free Press* of the 27th May 1967. There we learn that “he gave himself breathing space by renting an unused factory in the Olympia Arcade and carried on under the name of J.H. Allen & Co. We could locate nothing under that name in the newspapers which were consulted but were

on firmer ground when in July of 1900 the Allen Lithographic Company came into being. It would certainly not be the Olympia Arcade in 1900 – that only came into being in the 1920s but would most certainly be the former factory of Messrs. R. Wemyss & Co or at least part of it. Wemyss in 1897 was having the Caledonian Mills built at Spithead so the former factory would be available for use by Allen.

The Allen Lithographic Company Ltd was introduced to the world on the 14th July 1900 when a notice appeared in the *Fife Free Press*. It was formally announced that a new joint stock company had been formed with its

NEW KIRKCALDY JOINT STOCK COMPANY.—There has just been registered the Allen Lithographic Company, Limited, Townsend Place, Kirkcaldy, to carry on all or any of the businesses of law and general stationers, printers, publishers, lithographic printers, electrotypers &c. ; capital, £10,000, in £10 shares.

registered office at Townsend Place. The capital was to be £10,000 in £10 shares. For interest, the notice is reproduced here.

No matter how hard and for how long the formation of the company was researched absolutely nothing could be unearthed. The team were left with no alternative but to again consult the excellent book *Allen the Lithographers* which was produced by J. Harry Allen in 1998. All through these Objects we have attempted to work from primary reports but this time there is no alternative. The following was gleaned from the pages of the said book. Notice had been given of the dissolution of Couper and Allen and the formation of the Allen Lithographic Company Ltd. The Memorandum of Association was signed on the 11th July 1900 with the subscribers being J.H. Allen, his wife Sophie, and their eldest son George. In addition there were George Ferguson, a director of A.H. McIntosh, Charles Morrison, his son Robert C. Morrison, and a friend of the Morrisons – John Ayling. It seems that initially only 555 shares were issued and in the following manner:-

- Allen Family 155 shares
- Morrison Family 250 shares
- John Ayling 100 shares
- George Ferguson 50 shares

We are told that Allen was reluctant to borrow money and instead he was introduced to Charles Morrison, an Edinburgh lawyer, who agreed to subscribe only on condition he was appointed Chairman. On top of that he insisted his son, Robert C, Morrison, would be Joint Managing Director

along with Henry Allen (you have to ask what on earth possessed him to do that as he immediately lost overall control of the firm – yes, he did not have to borrow but surely the downside far outweighed that advantage).

Robert Morrison, who was also appointed Company Secretary, had previously been employed by the Edinburgh University Press. He was also a member of The Scottish Typographical Association - the letterpress printers Union. John Ayling, we are told, was also a member of that Union and it seems he was to become the letterpress foreman. Strangely, Ayling did not take up his shares for “financial reasons” although he was given a year to pay for them. Ultimately, in 1902, the shares were ultimately divided equally between George C. Allen and Alexander B. Allen.

It had been agreed that Robert Morrison would operate from his home in Edinburgh and travel to Kirkcaldy as and when required. It does seem that as well as being Company Secretary he spent much of his time on sales – in which he was “quite successful”. In the Great War, Morrison took up voluntary war work and seldom contacted the works. At the end of the conflict it was felt that he had done little for the firm despite receiving a salary. He was asked to resign as Joint Managing Director although he could remain on the Board. He simply resigned. We managed to find his birth in 1866, his father being Charles Morrison. The 'C' in his middle name was Clark – which was his mother's maiden name. He died in 1939 at the age of 67.

The aforementioned book records that in 1901 Andrew Arthur Rose of Craig & Rose Ltd became a shareholder. Our research revealed that the paint manufacturing firm had only come into existence on the 27th October 1900. Rose became a director of Allen Litho's in 1903 and in 1910, on the death of Charles Morrison, he was appointed Chairman. In all, three generations of the Rose family became directors of Allen Lithographic. Andrew was followed by his son, Hugh, who was Chairman from 1929 until 1960. His son, Colonel Hugh Rose, then joined the Board serving until 1988. We researched the obituary of Hugh Rose which appeared in *the Scotsman* on the 15th January 1965. Mention was made of his 60 years service with Craig & Rose but not a mention of Allen Lithographic. Similarly, a

MR HUGH ROSE

The death occurred yesterday in an Edinburgh nursing home of Mr Hugh Rose, T.D., C.A., J.P., of Gullane Hill House, Gullane, East Lothian, a former chairman of Craig & Rose, paint manufacturers, Edinburgh, and chairman of Leith Dock Commission.

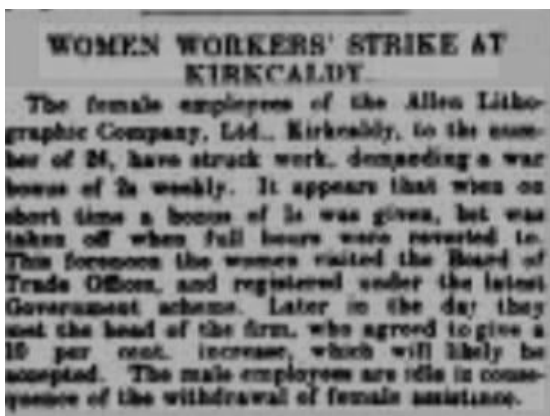
For many years he played a leading part in the public affairs of Leith. In his younger days he was prominent in the volunteer movement, joining the local battalion of The Royal Scots. In the First World War he commanded the 3/7th Battalion. He retired from the board of Craig & Rose in 1962, after more than 60 years service with the company.

review of Colonel Hugh Rose revealed a man who had an outstanding military career. He lost two brothers in the Second World War. Again he was connected to his family firm from 1935 until 1993 – but no mention of Allen Lithographic at all. It was of course a private limited company but even at that there seems to be a paucity of information. The year 1910 also saw the elevation to the Board of Henry's eldest son George.

The Great War of 1914-18 was a very difficult period for the company. The immediate effect was that the linoleum manufacturers had to turn their activities to armament production. With the loss of pattern books and other linoleum associated work demand nosedived causing significant financial issues. Men also left to join the army and, from time to time, when work did appear there were times when a lack of suitably trained staff was a handicap. George Allen remained with the firm and became the General Manager while his father kept his eye on the production side. Alexander Allen also enlisted in the army.

The years prior to 1914 had been profitable but the reserves of cash built up were now starting to dwindle. George Allen attempted to find new lines to keep the firm going and these included selling wrapping paper, paper bags, and anything else which could be manufactured from the stocks of paper which had been originally earmarked for the linoleum industry.

The scanning of the *Fife Free Press* during these war years contained mostly advertisements for workers both male and female. It is always harrowing when researching local papers from these years to find continual mentions of missing, wounded, or killed local men. This story was no different and a number of employees paid the ultimate price.



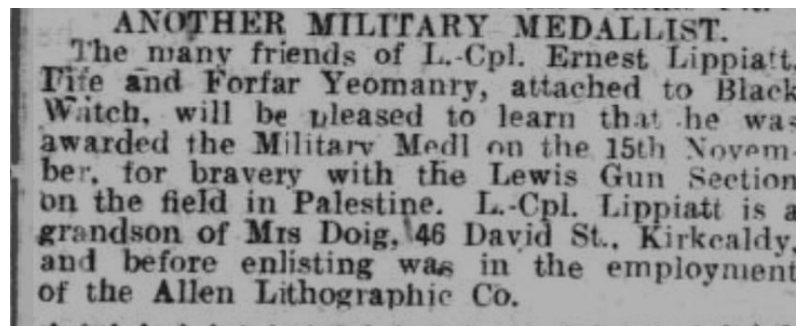
What was unearthed was a strike by 24 female workers of the firm which was covered by the *Edinburgh Evening News* of the 30th March 1915. There had been a bonus of 1/- (5p) per week paid when the plant was on short time but this was removed when a return to full time working was achieved. The ladies sought a bonus of 2/- (10p) for what they termed war work. When it was not forthcoming their labour

was withdrawn. It was resolved when a 10% addition was made to the wages.

Interestingly, the men were also idle by virtue of the lack of necessary assistance provided by the women.

The Fife Free Press of the 17th March 1917 reported that Allen Lithographic wished to be relieved of their contact with the Kirkcaldy Town Council for printing work. Quite simply, the cost of materials had risen far faster than the previously agreed contract prices. The Council took a sympathetic view as quality paper was rising at between 25% and 50%, while cheaper material was up by 30%. The contract was considered broken from the 1st March and the Council's departments were asked to get the best prices possible from Allen's or any other company in the future. In essence, prices were agreed at the time each estimate was provided.

The Fife Free Press of Saturday the 15th December 1917 reported that Lance-Corporal Ernest Lippiatt had been awarded the Military Medal for bravery whilst serving with a machine Gun Platoon in Palestine. He had worked with



Allen Lithographic prior to signing up and returned after the conflict. Mr Lippiatt died in 1986 but the fact was unearthed that he had been a special guest of the Kirkcaldy Branch of the Fife & Forfar Yeomanry Association's 45th annual dinner. A report was carried in the *Fife Free Press* of the 20th March 1981. Mr Lippiatt's two mentions came 64 years apart and the team also discovered that the Reverend Bryan Tomlinson of Abbotshall Church had been a Major in the Regiment.

Finally, an item in the *Fife Free Press* of the 20th April 1918 caught the team's eye. A concert was being held in the Opera House to raise funds for the 1/1st Fife Volunteer Regiment. To support the concert a book had been produced entitled *The Book of the Concert* which included the programme. It was the other material contained in the book which was of great interest and that was a history of the Volunteer Movement from 1860. It contained the names of the Headquarter's Staff and the officers, both warrant and non-commissioned, of 'A' - 'B' - 'C' and 'D' Companies of the Volunteers. In addition there was a portrait of the Commanding Officer, Sir Robert Lockhart, plus photographs of the officers, non-commissioned

to be operated from Hill Street until a later expansion in Church Lane allowed the transfer of book binding into the main offices.

The Fife Free Press made mention in their edition of the 20th June 1936 that a Building Warrant had been granted to Allen Lithographic for an extension to their works in Church Lane. This was a significant building of three storeys and filled the gap between the then building line and the entrance to the Parish Church. This spot had once been the home of a Kirkcaldy Candle Factory in the 1850's. Machinery was placed on all three floors with the former bookbinding business of Joseph Turner brought in on the second floor. Everything was now contained in the one complex.

When the Second World War came along – we once again scanned the pages of the *Fife Free Press* for any relevant snippets but once again information was at a premium. However, it was very much the same as in the previous conflict – linoleum manufacturing stopped and again it was very much diversification into anything that could be turned into work with paper off-cuts being turned into envelopes being an example. Work was received from the Polish forces based in the area and an example of this is shown. We were very fortunate that a friend of the team, of Polish descent, who collects cards, had a number of greeting cards which Allen Lithographic had produced in Polish. This time the foremen did not leave, being too old for active service. George and Alexander were in the same situation but both joined the A.R.P. and did their duty from the roof of their factory.

The war was a strain and J. Henry Allen eventually promoted his son George to Joint Managing Director – a tad unfair perhaps as he had been doing the job for a number of years. With the drop in production Alex joined his brother in the office in 1943. This was primarily due to the fact that, as reported in the *Fife Free Press* of the 25th October 1941 – Henry Heggie, of 23 Ava Street, had died. Heggie had joined the firm in an administrative capacity when it was Couper & Allen and altogether spent 47 years with the two firms, He was a director from 1935 until his death. He was also, for a spell, a member of Kirkcaldy Town Council . It is quite amazing how, time after time, research unearths any number of long service employees with the firm.

On Saturday, the 14th November 1942, *The Fife Free Press* reported the death of Mrs J.H. Allen at her home *Parkside*, Balwearie Road. She had

clearly predeceased her husband by some years. Interesting to note that her Christian name was never mentioned - only the more formal Mrs J.H. Mention was made of her late father and without question Mrs Allen was very heavily involved in charity work. She was connected with Whytescauseway Baptist Church for 63 years.

On a happier note the *Dundee Courier* of the 12th May 1939 reported that the Warden and Lass for 1939 had been appointed by the *Kirkcaldy Hospital*



Pageant Committee. The Warden was no less than Harry Allen – the 23 year old son of George C. Allen, with the lass being Kathleen Ayre from Burntisland. The photograph which accompanied the article is shown here. Significant soft facts were given about both but we already knew the outcome as, on the 14th November 1942, the same newspaper reported on the presentation of cutlery and a silver cigarette case by the employees of Allen Lithographic to the couple as a

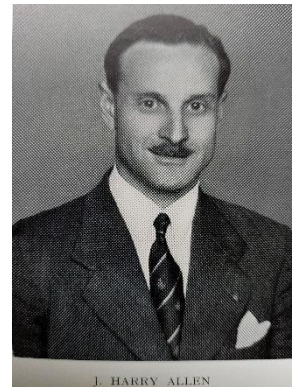
wedding present. At the time Harry Allen was serving as a Lieutenant of a searchlight battery with the Royal Artillery. Noting that the family home was *Sunningdale*, Townsend Crescent, George Allen would not have had far to run to carry out his A.R.P. Duties. We should point out that Miss Ayre was the daughter of Wilfred Ayre – the Chairman and Managing Director of the *Burntisland Shipbuilding Company*. Wilfred Ayre became a shareholder in 1965 and served as a Non- Executive Director with Allen Lithographic from 1965 – 1971. By that time he had long become Sir Wilfred. At that stage he was a board member of some 40 companies, banks and national committees.

The end of the war in 1945 saw work once again return to former levels, albeit slowly, but the wind of change was blowing. While the company returned to profit within two years there was a significant alteration in the sense that heavy industry was giving way to electronics. Word processors, microchips, computers and electronics, were changing production methods. Over and above not every printer had had access to lithographic machinery but the invention of the off-set machine gave every printer the opportunity to expand their offerings and eat away at Allen's specialised men and

machinery production.

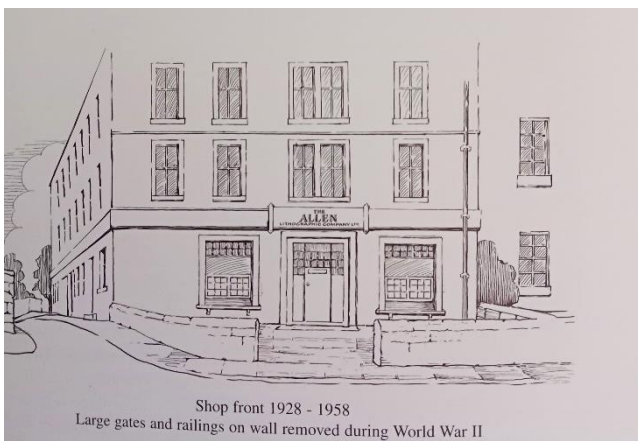
Allen's were still involved in linoleum work but commercial work in the more traditional sense was still very important and becoming more so. The late 1950s into the 1960s saw the start of the decline of the linoleum industry and the 1963 demise of Barry, Ostlere & Shepherd in Kirkcaldy was keenly felt. The machines which had printed the pattern books could not be utilised for any other work which led to some redundancies. However, the firm had not been asleep they had been able to expand their activities.

J. Harry Allen, the representative of the third generation, was now at the helm and some of these new activities included the production of gift stationery in the shape of notelets etc. Work was also obtained from the Pitlochry Festival Theatre which was closely followed by the Pitlochry Tourist Association. Printing cheques for some 140 branches of the National Commercial Bank of Scotland was new and innovative. A breakthrough was made into the Scottish Border's knitwear industry. Credit for this was given to Sales Manager, Philip Pow, who worked tirelessly in so many ways to gain a foothold. Lyle & Scott were the first firm to be gained as a customer and soon other well known brands followed.



Another innovation was the development of non-carbon paper – many older readers will remember the use of carbon paper to take copies. One of the other notable successes was the ability to break into book printing and until 1975 all diaries produced by Collins were printed in Kirkcaldy. There is little doubt that the firm was responding to change.

One of the other major changes was the foresight of the firm in 1958 to see a growth in demand for office equipment and stationery. The frontage of the east-most part of the complex on Townsend Place was turned into a bright retail shop specialising in these items and became a prime outlet in the town and surrounding area. These were long before the days of High Street brands such as Ryman's. It was said that prior to its conversion into a



shop – that part of the building had not been altered since it was purchased by Archibald Beveridge in 1877.

Taken from the publication *Blowing our own Trumpet* which was a small bound booklet which seems to have been produced by the firm this advertisement gives a clear, concise and precise record of what Allen Lithographic were producing in the late 1950s. It says far more than simple words.

A momentous moment was reported on by the *Fife Free Press* in their edition of the 29th March 1958. This was a rather irritating find as this, had it been found earlier, would have saved considerable research. On the positive side significant details came to light which are worthy of inclusion.

WHAT WE DO . . .

TO detail the types of work produced would indeed make a formidable list, but the following headings will give you some idea of the great scope of our resources :—

Linoleum reproductions (we were pioneers in this art)	Posters
Business and private stationery	Labels (for bottles or packages)
Catalogues	Calling cards
Greeting cards (mainly bulk printings for national publishers)	Cartons
Showcards	Waiters' and counter check books
Brochures	Paper bags
Envelopes	Carpet reproductions
Books	Tags
Wedding stationery	Cheque books
Business cards	Maps (on War Office Lists)
Magazines	Receipt books
Office Systems	Leaflets
Loose leaf systems and binders	Wrapping papers — sulphite, greasproof, kraft, etc.
General Printers (Contractors to H.M. Stationery Office)	

Our retail department sells everything from desks to chairs, pens to pencils, notebooks to ledgers, cloakroom tickets to receipt books, rubbers to pencil sharpeners, gift stationery to personal greeting cards, inks to ink-wells—in fact, we are general stationers.

Note.—Much of our work is produced for other printers or agents in many parts of the country and as a result does not always bear our imprint.



The subject matter of the article was the joint retiral of George C. Allen and Alexander B. Allen after 55 years service by each. Both had joined the firm in 1902 although George had secured earlier work

experience with a bank. George was more the administrator who, as mentioned previously, became a director in 1909. He had become Joint Managing Director in 1942 until his father's death in 1951. At that point he became Managing Director until his retiral. He was also the Company Secretary from 1918 until 1959. After his retiral he had remained as Secretary for a short period until his successor was bedded in. Despite his retirement he became Company Chairman in 1960, a position he held for 6 years. That was followed by being created Honorary President in 1966 until 1978. George was married to Rachael Menzies, the daughter of Thomas Menzies, the well known builder. There were two of a family – the previously mentioned John Harry Allen and a daughter Dorothy. George's natural home was in the firm's offices not the works.

Alexander Allen was far different in the sense he was a practical man and had served his time as a lithographic artist. His home



was instinctively the works. Alexander married Violet Hutchison and they had three children – John born 1928, Kathleen was born a year later, and finally Violet who was born in 1938. None of the three children entered the business. He had also become a shareholder in 1909 and a director in 1924. He had been content to be the Works/General Manager and had never sought or obtained high office although he had a 20 year spell from 1920 holding the title Assistant General Manager.



Although both men spoke at the retiral function it was George who gave most of the valuable detail. Examples were that he believed he was the only person present who had a clear memory of the Kirkcaldy Printing Works when they were under the control of Archibald Beveridge. In fact he had been at school with one of Beveridge's sons. However, he painted a picture of Archibald Beveridge falling on “evil times through over-ambition, lack of capital and the impact of growing competition” leading to the serious illness which ultimately led to his death. He also disclosed that his father

had started his working life in a draper's shop but felt it was not “work for a man”. He had spotted an advert in Archibald Beveridge's window for an apprentice lithographer and also an apprentice compositor. He thought that lithographer sounded more important when he was asked by Beveridge which he preferred – the rest is history.

Alexander Allen concentrated in his reply more on the people he had worked with praising their skills and commitment. He had little extra to offer but it was clear that he held the workforce in high regard.

All of the speakers praised the contribution which the two men had made to the firm and they were each presented with a suitably inscribed silver salver from the company. This function had taken place at the Station Hotel and after lunch they attended a function at the Burma Ballroom where they were presented with silver cigarette cases by the workforce. The newspaper report suggested over 200 people were present. The over-riding message from both functions was a well run, well managed, family company who had only experienced two real setbacks and both were in wartime.

From the first of April 1958, George's son, J. Harry Allan, would become Managing Director in place of his father, with Mr A.P. Peggie currently a

director becoming General Manager. Mr D. Swinton, the photo litho foreman, was promoted to Works Manager. In the blink of an eye it was all change.

Expansion was on the horizon and in 1979 a retail outlet was opened in Glenrothes. In 1983 a move was made into St. Andrews when the longstanding firm W. C.Henderson & Sons Ltd were taken over. Hendersons for many years had been suppliers of print and stationery to *The Royal and Ancient Golf Club*. This led to a new connection with Allen's starting to print *The Rules of Golf*. A photograph taken at the opening ceremony was included in the St. Andrew's Citizen on the 6th May 1983. J Harry Allen is third from the left.



The Allen Lithographic Company Limited held a private reception last Friday to celebrate the opening of their new shop in Greyfriars Garden, St Andrews, pictured at the reception are (from left) — Mr Dick Caddy, printing and retail manager; Miss Jean Taylor, retail manager; Mr J. Harry Allen, company chairman; Mr Philip Pow, production; Mr George Wilson, financial secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club; Mr Bill Mackintosh, managing director of Markinch Printing Company.

Some years before these two outlets appeared, in 1968 the firm had made a foray into Markinch and purchased the Markinch Printing Company. It became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Allen Lithographic Company complete with its own Board.. The retail shop at 14 High Street was refurbished on modern lines and over the next few years an extension doubled the size of the machine room which led to increased contracts. The

major connection for the Markinch Printing Company had been its close affinity with *John Haig & Co.* whose bottling plant was on the doorstep. A significant contract was secured with the local *Fife Paper Mills* who became one of the biggest customers in the 1980s and 1990s. John Haig & Co. remained the largest customer and the self adhesive label for the whisky bottles came into being in 1974. Here is a wee advert for the Markinch Printing Company taken from the *Fife Free Press* of the 20th February 1981. This was an excellent business which performed well but in 1989 it amalgamated and, as we shall see, an end came to the Markinch firm which had been in the town since 1928.

Since the retirement of George C. Allen and Alexander B. Allen in 1958 the family had been represented on the Board by J. Harry Allan. Born in 1916,

as George had mentioned when he retired in 1958, Harry had been trained to take over control of the firm, having joined in 1932 as part of the office team. He had spent time at Herriot Watt College in Edinburgh studying printing and printing science before continuing his training in various departments in Kirkcaldy. As already mentioned that came to a juddering halt on the outbreak of war. At the war's conclusion he returned to take a full part in the firm's management. A brief potted history of his career is given below and J. Harry Allen can be considered the third and last generation to be involved with the firm. Although his daughter Marjorie had a brief involvement from 1984 – 1988 it was not what could be termed a lengthy connection. Marjorie was a director from 1987-88. 1988 is an important year for the firm as shall be revealed shortly. Back to J. Harry Allen:-

- Joined 1932.
- Shareholder 1936.
- Director 1946 – 1988.
- Managing Director 1958-1976.
- Chairman 1966 – 1988.
- Non Executive Director 1988 -1996
- Managing Director of the Markinch Printing Company 1968-1975.
- Chairman of the Markinch Printing Company 1968 – 1988.

It would be possible but hugely time consuming to relate the positions and interests Harry Allen had both in his own business and externally. Certainly one of the most notable and prestigious would be being elected President of the Society of Master Printers in Scotland from 1960-1962. He had a lengthy period as a Rotarian and was also interested in fishing and music where he was a violinist. A Photograph of the Board at the time of the centenary had to be included. Extreme right – George C. Allen with Sir Wilfred Ayre next to him. J Harry Allen is 4th from the left with Colonel Hugh Rose on his left. The other directors from the left are Albert P. Peggie, John Dick and John Bayne. The photograph appeared in the *Fife Free Press* of the 27th May 1967.



At this point it should be mentioned that James Morgan had joined the company in 1974 becoming General Manager in 1975 and replaced Harry

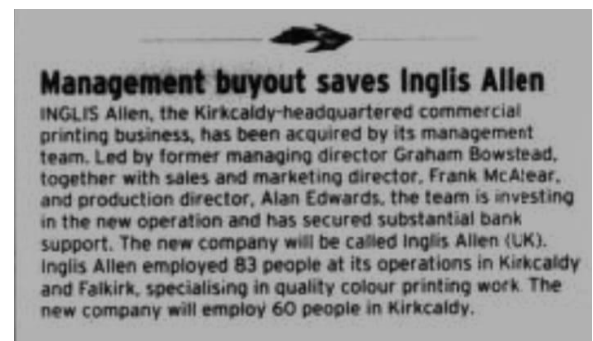
Allen as Managing Director in 1976, a position he held until 1988. It was early in 1988 that Morgan resigned and understandably Harry Allen had, more and more, left the day to day management in his hands. His leaving presented a significant problem which had been exacerbated by the retiral of the firm's accountant the previous year. Harry Allen had no real appetite to become involved again and neither did he relish the task of seeking a replacement. As an interim solution C. Inglis McAulay, who since 1984 had been a Non- Executive Director, was asked if he could help. McAulay already had his own printing company – Inglis Paul of Falkirk.



Allen's Board knew this could only be a temporary situation and decided the best course of action was to find a suitable buyer. Inglis McAulay after some negotiations took over The Allen Lithographic Company in 1988. Initially, Allen Litho and Inglis Paul operated under their own names but managed by the Board of Inglis Paul with Inglis McAulay as Chairman of Allen Lithographic. In 1990 the three companies – Markinch Printing Company – Inglis Allen and the Allen Lithographic merged into Inglis Allen. Harry Allen stayed as a Non-Executive Director until 1996 but in his own words 1996 was not the important date rather – **It was at this time I decided to retire ending 120 years of family association with the Kirkcaldy Company. (1868- 1988)**

It was never our intention to go past 1988 but sometimes circumstances dictate a change. In the Scotsman of the 6th September 2001 we note the headline:- Management Buyout Saves Inglis Allen.

“Inglis Allen, the Kirkcaldy headquartered commercial printing business, has been acquired by its management team. Led by former managing director, Graham Bowstead, together with sales and marketing director Frank McAlair and production director, Alan Edwards, the team is investing in the new operation and has obtained substantial bank support. The new company will be known as Inglis Allen (U.K.). Inglis Allen employs 83 men at its operations in Kirkcaldy and Falkirk specialising in quality colour printing work. The new company will employ 60 people in

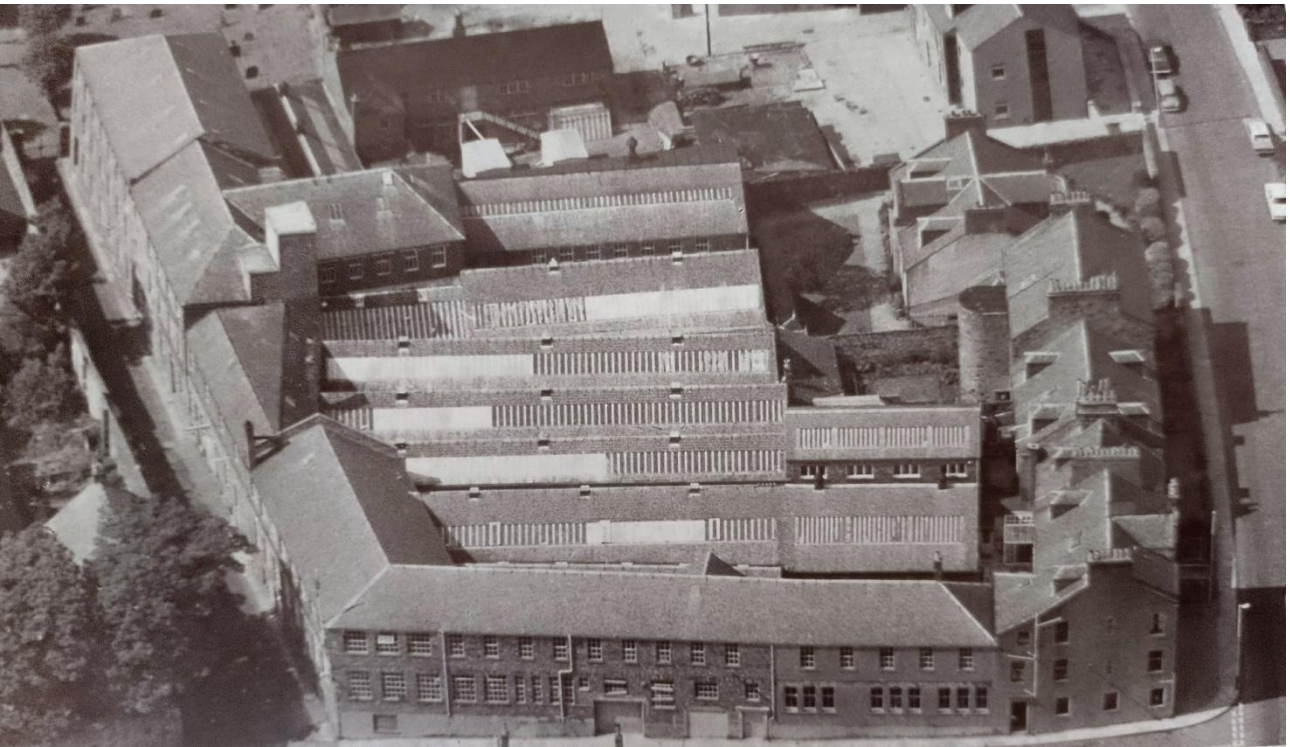


Kirkcaldy.”

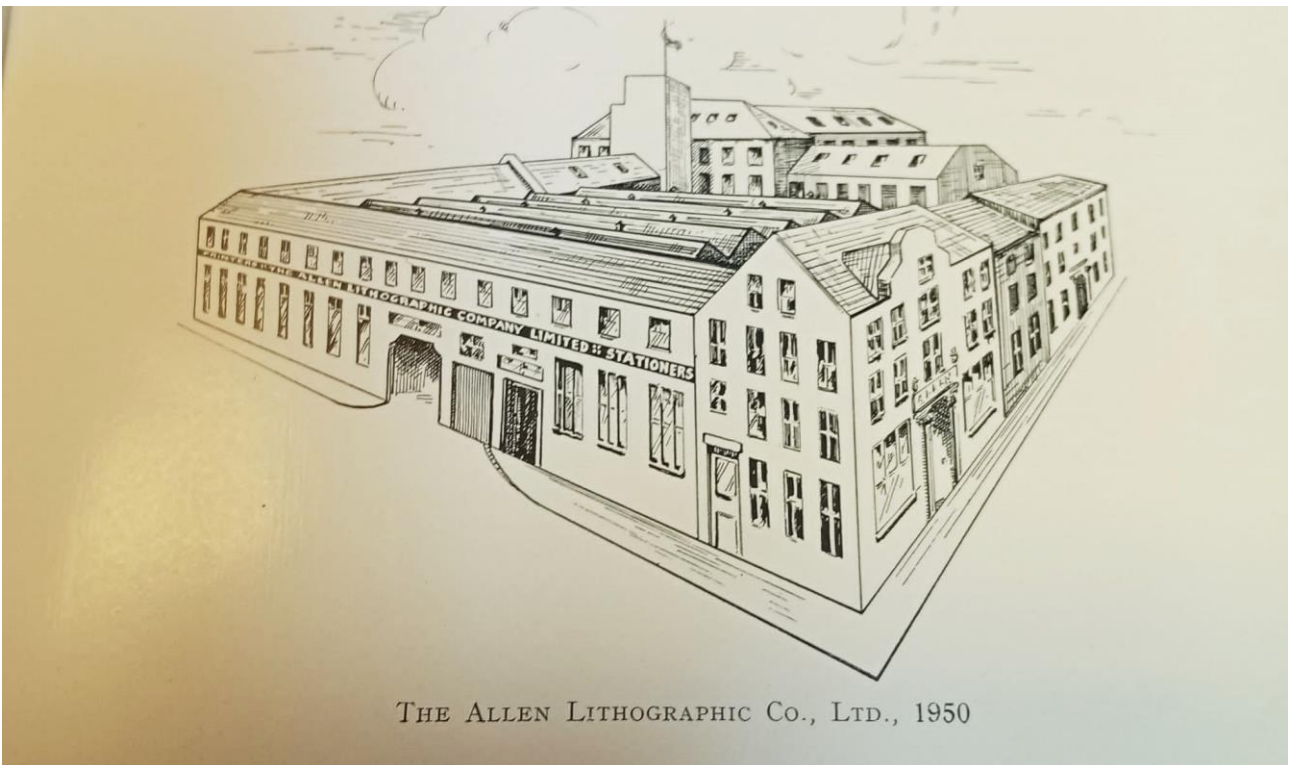
Sadly the plan was only short lived with Inglis Allen (UK) petitioning for a compulsory liquidation order on the 12th April 2007. The petition took some time to process but was concluded 27th April 2011 with the company being dissolved on the 16th August 2011.

Today the complex has been turned into flats although much of the outside facade remains. Yes, of course the world has changed and nothing lasts forever. We believe that the ideal finish in a changing world were words spoken in 1958 at the retiral of the second generation. They were spoken by Mr A. Romaines of the Dunfermline Press as it seems he was far seeing:-

“Allen Litho is a happy, family founded firm, based on sound principles of management, relationships and organisation, of which Kirkcaldy could well be proud and the likes of which has been the background to the sound British economy through the last one hundred years. But we are emerging today into the era of the big monopolistic concerns and into a cut-throat battle of politics. On the one hand prosperous family businesses which have been the secure source of income for so many working people are forced out of business by ruthless business combines or are taken over by the state where the personal touch is removed and the law of 'couldn't care less' predominates”.



Factory/Office/RetailComplex – has now been developed for residential purposes



THE ALLEN LITHOGRAPHIC Co., LTD., 1950

Acknowledgements

This story has been produced almost exclusively through researching newspapers. All the individual newspapers used for articles, sketches and advertisements, are credited in the text. All the newspaper information was obtained from *Find my past Newspaper Archive* in partnership with the British Library.

Mapping – The map on page 17 is reproduced with the kind permission of the National Library of Scotland.

The following books and pamphlets were made available to us, mainly for fact checking and confirmation, by the staff of Kirkcaldy Library's Local History Section. That help is appreciated.

These were:-

- Something to Blow About
- Our Progress in Print.
- John Crawford – believed to be by A.J. Campbell.
- 50 years of Service
- Allen's The Lithographers by J. Harry Allen.
- Bound copies of some issues of the House Magazine – *The Allentonian*.

As mentioned in the text Allen's was a Private Company and not everything found its way in the media. For this reason, while we pride ourselves on research, *Allen's the Lithographers* proved very valuable on a number of occasions. In some instances there appears to be minor variations in some of the dates quoted in some of the publications but they are minor and do not detract from the story.

We noted that when J. Harry Allen wrote his book he offered praise to the Library Staff for their assistance.. Decades later we are pleased to acknowledge their continued support – they have been unfailing throughout our project.