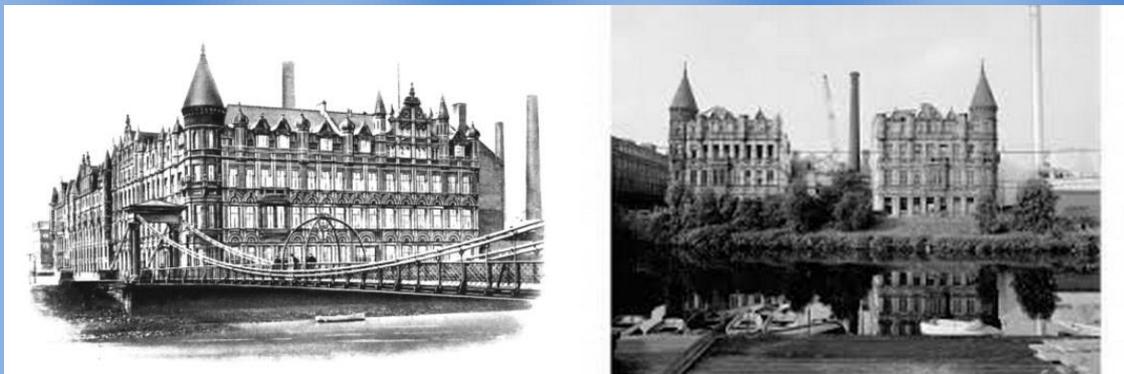


Tales of the Riverman 28



The area on the south bank opposite the Humane Society wharfage was known as Little Govan----Ballater Street was Govan Street—the Kings Bridge was Govan Street Bridge

Most of this area used to be co-operative bakery buildings—the main building being one of the really beautiful buildings of Glasgow—when it closed it was hoped that it would become the new Transport Museum—but it was pulled down—a real shame.



Rowing Clubs rowed out of Boat hiring stations that lined the south bank from the Kings Bridge to the weir—and from the Humane Society wharf on the north bank—the boat hiring has gone now—but I am delighted to say that the rowing clubs are thriving---this is one of the best rivers in Britain for rowing –provided we keep the area upstream of the weir as free of motorised craft as possible—Fine boat rowing is not suitable below the weir for various reasons—and the weir has become the barrier between motorised and non-motorised.



That of course does not include the our friends in the Rutherglen Cruising Club who slowly make their way downstream to faraway exotic places in the Spring of the year and return weather-beaten and smiling in the Autumn to lift their craft from the water and lovingly clean-paint and repair for the next summer.



There were so many drowning accidents in the river in the 1800's that the Humane Society persuaded the City Fathers to build swimming Baths at the Greenhead ---what is now the housing complex to the east end of the Templeton Carpet Factory. Glasgow has done well providing swimming Pools and at one time boasted a swimming pool in nearly every primary school.

Before there was a bridge at McNeil Street there was a ferry operated mostly by the Humane Society officers who at that time also supplemented their wages by hiring boats. It was at the Society wharfage that Moses McNeil one of the first players of Rangers used to row as did James Aitken the Trainer of Queens Park—Aitken was part of a Glasgow Humane Society Team that won the World Life Saving Championship in Paris in 1900. Rowing was the biggest sport in the mid 1800's with hundreds of pounds prize money being raced for. During the short period when the weir was taken away and the river became less usable for rowing, sportsmen took to other sports –mainly football and Glasgow Green saw the formation of the Rangers and Celtic Clubs.



Thomas Lipton came down to the Society wharfage when he was young and honed his love of boats. Former Scottish Football Association President John McBeth rowed and raced on the River

Charles Gordon O'Neill the designer of St Andrews Bridge went to Australia where he founded the St Vincent de Paul Society in New South Wales



Our Tidal weir and pump Bridge keeps the water upstream at a regulated height---this was to enable factories to use the river water as a cooling system. The riverbank was built up using iron slag from the steel works—large stones laid carefully from the weir on the north bank to Tollcross and from the weir to Rutherglen on the south bank. This stone rebaiting and the fact that we do not get a low tide upstream of the weir--keeps the banking in place and stops it subsiding into the river

The River is still classified as Tidal to Boggleshole Ford Cambuslang

