

The Bridgeton Umbrella

Recollections of Bridgeton Past



OLYMPIA

The ABC Minors

"The famous ABC Olympia Picture House, my favourite picture hall, the one I attended the most, and I especially remember every Saturday morning going to the ABC Minors.... Fantastic!!!"

ABC Minors Song

*We are the boys & girls well known as
Minors of the ABC....*

And every Saturday we line up,

To see the films we like,

And shout aloud with glee!

We love to laugh and have a sing song

Just a happy crowd are we...

We're all pals together... We're minors of the ABC!



"The show generally followed the same pattern: a short comedy such as Laurel & Hardy, then a cartoon, then a serial that ended with a cliffhanger to encourage us to return next week... it worked!"
Will McArthur.



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LD MEMORIES

ADDRESSY

OUNGSTERS

ATINEES

LAYING IN THE STREET

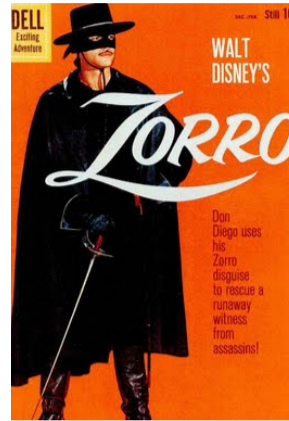
NSPIRATION

BC MINORS

"My mother was at the opening night of the Orient cinema in the Gallowgate, she said it was a Laurel and Hardy film. She was given a brochure of the event, sadly lost over the years..."
Donna Robertson

Favourite Film Stars

- Gene Autrey
- Roy Rogers
- Boris Karloff
- Peter Lorre
- Sylvia Syms
- Fred Astaire
- Ginger Rodgers
- John Wayne
- Paul Newman
- Liz Taylor
- Doris Day



The Scotia "We called it 'the Fleapit', as it was a bit run down."

"The Wee Royal Picture House, with bench seats, where you could get in for a few pennies and a jam jar."



PLAZA
NUNEATON ST.



Dalmarnock Primary School 1963

Other Bridgeton Cinemas

- Arcadia Cinema, London Road/Arcadia St.
- The Wee Royal, Main Street.
- The Dalmarnock Picture House, Nuneaton St.
- Kings Picture House, James Street.
- The Star Palace, Main Street.
- Strathclyde Picture House, Summerfield St.
- The Premiere, Kirkpatrick Street.
- The Wee Gergie
- The Plaza Cinema



Piggot Boys of Brigton



The Olympia

Let's take a wee walk, doon memory lane
Back tae the sixties, re-live wance again.
Up tae the cross wi yir pals aw in tow
Gaun tae the Olympia tae watch a good show

Intae the wee shoap hauf wiy doon the street
Canny make-up mah mind, a drink urr a sweet
The wumman's getting peeved, "Ahv no goat aw day"
"Awright then Missus, ah'll hiv a wee penny tray"

Intae the queue, haufwiy roon the block
Us weans urr aw shouting, and running amok
Oot comes the man, ah think it's a sin
Says "If yiz aw don't shutup, yiz urr no getting in".

That tobers us up and quietens us doon.
The queue's moving roon so we'll get in soon.
Intae the pictures, mah ticket ahv bought
Tae watch the film Jason, and thay Argonauts

Efter the fillum and oan the wiy hame
We aw take oan characters and play a wee game
Big Shugs says "ahm Jason, coz ahv goat nae fear"
Awright says Mamie then ah'll be Medea.

Those days urr gone, bit don't shed a tear
The Olympia's stull therr, never you fear.
It's lookin quite splendid and ye know whit? By jingo
Wi a library and café at least it's no bingo.

So oor thanks tae Clyde Gateway fur daen us proud
Fae local Brigtonians and the GlescaPals Crowd
The Olympia's been saved fae the wrecking crew
And the re-gen of Brigton's been long over due.
By Helen Ross (Nell)



"The Olympia was the East End's equivalent to the Odeon in the town. When I was a lad the Olympia seemed like a posh place to me. Do you remember how the big chandeliers used to dim very slowly just before the start of the film? My last recollection of the Olympia in all its glory was when they were showing 'Goldfinger'- the queues were massive. A few years later I headed south. By the time I came back up here the Olympia was just a shadow of its former self, a forlorn building, its majestic presence and status as a landmark, along with the Umbrella in Bridgeton, now becoming an eyesore."

None of the other halls were on a par with the Olympia, I used to feel like a princess walking in. The "chucker oots", as we called the ushers or usherettes, were immaculate in maroon coloured uniforms with hats, who welcomed you on the way in, always polite and smiling. On the left was the balcony stairs in cream terrazzo with black lines at the front and a gold coloured handrail. The stairs twisted slightly to the right as you went up and you came to a landing with the most lovely purple and red carpet, deep and plush. My highlight was the toilet, it was immaculate and clean. In those days you wouldn't have used a cinema toilet as they were usually horrible, but this was beautiful with big mirrors and subdued lighting.

OLYMPIA

There was a fruit barrow always parked outside the cinema at night for cinema-goers to buy oranges.

Mary Murray sold icecream in the Olympia for a long time, from 1944 until 1959 approximately.



Andrew, Sarah & Jim Hosie.

"I remember the Geggie picture house in Kirkpatrick Street and do recall there being a stuffed lion on display, probably an MGM movie advertisement, way back in the 1950s/60s."



My most wonderful night at the Olympia was seeing the lovely Sylvia Syms. Apparently she had been passing on her way to the Cadora in Union St. to some big celebrity show, and noticed the film "Ice Cold In Alex" on the billboards. So she got her driver to stop and she came in and spoke to the people at the front of the picture house. We heard rustling from the back of the stalls and down came this vision, in a satin long dress with matching stole, her hair was up in a French plait at the back with sparkles...

by Donna Robertson.



Marquis St. children pose for a group photograph, 1945 approx.

There was a small picture house near Marquis Street, across London Road called 'The Premiere' otherwise known as 'The Geggie' - I don't know why. The name was a throw-back from the previous generation. The back of the hall was only about six or seven steps up where there was individual seating, whereas down at the front of the hall, patrons sat on communal wooden benches. That explains why I always opted to sit at the back of the hall. There was always a commotion within 'The Premiere' such that most of the time you couldn't hear the action on screen. Film favourites of the era included, among others, Flash Gordon, Abbot & Costello, Fred Astaire and the inimitable Ginger Rogers.

Jess Roxburgh, nee Findlay, formerly of Marquis Street, Bridgeton.

FILMS WE SAW

Flash Gordon
 Bambi
 Zorro
 The Wizard of Oz
 Ben Hur
 Raintree County
 Summer Holiday
 A Summer Place
 Suddenly Last Summer
 Ivanhoe
 Young at Heart
 Butterfield Eight
 Up the Junction
 Far from the Madding Crowd
 Dr Zhivago
 The Quiet Man
 Love Me or Leave Me
 Pillow Talk
 The Searchers
 Calamity Jane
 Waterloo Bridge
 Bugs Bunny
 Roy Rogers
 Dumbo
 The King & I
 Hop Along Cassidy
 A Fist Full of Dollars
 Old Mother Riley
 Guns Of Navarone
 Laurel & Hardy
 The Lone Ranger
 Woody Woodpecker
 Daffy Duck
 The Roadrunner
 TweetyPie
 Frankenstein
 The Searchers
 The Beast with Five Fingers
 Gabby Hayes
 Somebody Up There Likes Me
 Jolson Sings Again
 Singing In the Rain
 High Noon
 She Wore A Yellow Ribbon

Another fascination with me was all the smoke going through the projector light, it was so acceptable, but it did make lovely shapes with the beam shining through it. A night at the pictures back then was a real night out, you didn't just see the one film and out the door, we always had a B film, then the trailers lasted for ages, then adverts, then the lights would go up and the two ice cream women would be in position with their trays and white uniforms, you never saw a scramble like it to get to her for Orange Maid ices, choc ices and Kai Ora orange drinks in horrible wee cream coloured card containers with a band of metal holding them shut and a straw... they always spilled all over the place trying to open them.

Happiest Memories

- Playing in the Street
- Baggie minnies (minnows) in Richmond Park
- Glasgow Green at Fayre Fortnight, the smell of popcorn and candy floss
- Band Of Hope, a badge & a sixpence
- Family parties with everyone singing



A group fellowship of 'Church House', St Francis In The East. (Jessie Findlay appears centre).

Black Cat Picture Hall - Parkhead

The Arcadia "Perfect Talkies"

We used to stand for "the Queen" at the end of the film.



555 London Road, Tenement flat of Robert Currie, on Coronation Day, 2nd June 1953.

More Memories of Performers

- Reginald Jecks
- Marguerite Broadfoote
- George Gray and Company
- The Roland Brothers
- The Six Rubies
- Melt and Bray (Comedians)
- Arthur Hinton
- King and King (Comedy duo)
- Amy Lloyd Earle
- The Four Behans
- Una Linley
- Bert Lennard
- The Harmonics
- Harry & Ella (Harmonising duo)
- Miss Ronna Shanara's Troupe of Hybrid Mountain Goats!!

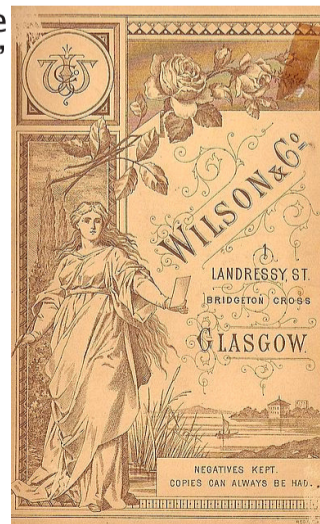


Nightingale Cycling Club Prize Presentation 1946; Bobby Kane, right at the front, older brother of George Kane, was Club Champion. The club met in Old Dalmar-nock Road, Bridgeton at that time, the building in the background of the photograph below right.

"After the matinee finished there was a mad dash down the steps into the blinding day light and along to a bakers shop for tuppence worth of broken cakes before he shut for the weekend. I think the last picture I remember from the Arcadia was Flood-tide', where Gordon Jackson made a live appearance and signed autographs with co-star Rona Anderson."

"There was a rolling programme of films and you could sit through them again if you missed the start. The lights would come up at the end of the film and the curtain would be drawn."

"I remember the wee Royal picture house, where you could get in for a few pennies and a jam jar. The Kings picture house in James St was another favourite. When you were watching the picture they would come round and spray you with disinfectant from an old fashioned pump action spray."



Wilson & Co photographers, Landressy St.



John Caldwell and cousins William & Robert Park, at the backcourt of 57 Muslin Street, circa 1940. The tenement faced onto Dalmar-nock Rd at Peter Hair the grocers.



BOYS BRIGADE
RUMFORD STREET
INDUSTRIAL
DAISY PARK
GEGGIE
EAST END
TEMPLETONS
OLYMPIA
NELSON'S MONUMENT



When there was a flag up on Glasgow Green it meant there was a show on.

Maggie McIver who owned the Barrowlands, and the Barras, went to Bernard Street School. She started off with a barrow and became a very rich woman.



The Neilly family at Hogmanay, Woddrop St, 1958. Eldest brother John takes the traditional family photo after the "big meal" which usually comprised home made soup, steak pie, fruit cake and shortbread washed down by whisky, sherry, beer, shandy and cordials. L to R: William, Edward, Thomas, John, Mary, Flora Neilly



Rita Montague dancing The PillBox and the Powder Puff Ballet. Mrs Daly's Dance School, London Road.



"Life was more colourful and interesting. You felt cocooned by the area you lived in."
 Margo McPherson

My Dancing Story by Rita Montague

I started dance classes when I was 5 years old. My first dance was the Powder Puff Ballet dance, and there were other dances; the Pill Box, Top Hat and Tails, and Highland dances etc. My mum and aunts would stay up late at night making my costumes and sewing on sequins. I stayed on at the dance class until I was 15 years old, when I helped teach the younger children.



Children of Fairbairn Street, 1935



Kerr Street pals- Moira Wallerstein, Jackie Gardiner, Robert Piggot, Rita McKenna, Helen Revie. Wilma Wallerstein, Helen and Edward Jackson.

Memories of Bridgeton Shops



On the roof of John Lewis's Department Store.



Adam's Chip Shop was in Baltic Street, opposite Fairbairn Street. Then it moved to Dalmarnock Rd, at Fairbairn St.



There were two second-hand shops along London Road in Brigton, I knew the girl whose mother owned one. Her name was Mrs Bell, she had lovely brass stuff in her shop and lovely tables, all highly polished and kept nice but out of fashion for the 50s. I always wondered who bought her stuff as I never saw anyone in the shop. It was at Kilpatrick Street corner where the Geggie picture hall was, still is... the building is a workshop now. Oh the stories I have about that place! As you went in the front entrance they had half a lion in a glass case, I don't know why, what would you want half a lion for? That always confused me. They sold cheap sweets that rotted yer teeth, chewy toffee in all colours, but it was great, no place like it. You couldn't hear the film when it was a romantic part, as the crowd all shouted and booed but it was fun. The lights never went up in there as I think it was so dirty. Just past the cinema was 'Howes', who used to make sewing machines way back a hundred years ago, but when Singer came over from the US they almost went out of business and changed to making bikes instead. Curleys grocer shop, small and always queued out, with women, every day it was packed. We stood on sawdust floors waiting to be served by the many women serving, about six or more, and what a service you got. They would fly around the shop picking up tins from shelves, patting butter with wooden paddles and putting all the messages in your bag, while writing down on a wee bit of paper

"You didn't have to leave Bridgeton to buy quality goods - there were lots of good shops."

Peggy, the Mother of Robert Currie, outside their family shop at 4 Silvergrove Street.



all the prices as they went and then adding it up, then putting the bit of paper in the bag. Broken biscuits were a favourite, cheap for big families; a quarter of tea in a packet not teabags; a dozen eggs that you got in a thick brown paper bag. The window was always covered with that white stuff, telling prices in fancy writing. I used to love watching the man doing his artwork. The till would ring out loud when the lassie put the money in, I loved those big tills, usually gold coloured, all scrolling and fancy. I dreamt about having one. Over the road on London Road was Sharps, a shop that did everything from a needle to an anchor, tin baths, mop pails, buckets all hung outside with price tags stuck onto them. It was packed from end to end as you walked in with brushes on the walls, shovels and mops, and the smell of the firelighters nearly knocked you down. They had a wee thing on the wall that tested lightbulbs as you bought them. It was run by a husband and wife, and I can still see him in his dark grey overall, a tall stern man who never smiled. His wife had sticky out buck teeth that fascinated me, as she spoke funny because of them. It was a great wee shop that sold things like green and black soap, women used these for hair washing and for the mop pails, even though hardly any women used mops, that was shameful back then- they all prided themselves on going down on hands and knees to scrub. Next was the Co-op shoe shop, in fact there were three Co-op shops in a row, the shoe shop which was two door slanted into one area, one for women, the other for men. They sold some lovely shoes, and always very polite to customers, fussing round and helping you try them on. Over the road was a strange set of houses, set back from the road with a railway wall in red brick and a low wall that kids would walk on. The houses had their own front doors and were on two levels. Part of the wall is still there, on London road near Dunn Street. Next to this wall was Wisemans, a quite large clothes shop that sold shirts, blouses and jumpers. Cafes were scattered the length of the road, although not as many as the pubs, one on every corner and in every street. On Fordneuk Street, where I lived when young, there was a big pawn shop. It sold some lovely jewellery and I loved going in with my auntie. It had a distinctive smell of cardboard that I loved and the clothes were kept in big dark green cardboard boxes that the woman would take down off the wall. I loved the glass top counters too where they kept the second hand jewellery and never tired of looking in at all the lovely stuff. In the window it was baby clothes, wee girls hats made with fluffy wool, and gorgeous big satin ribbons. Next to the pawn shop was Davy Barclays, a newsagent that sold sweets and wee toys, he was a nice man and never saw anyone else in the shop serving. I always rushed in on my way to Queen Mary Street School if I needed a new pencil or rubber - I loved that wee shop.

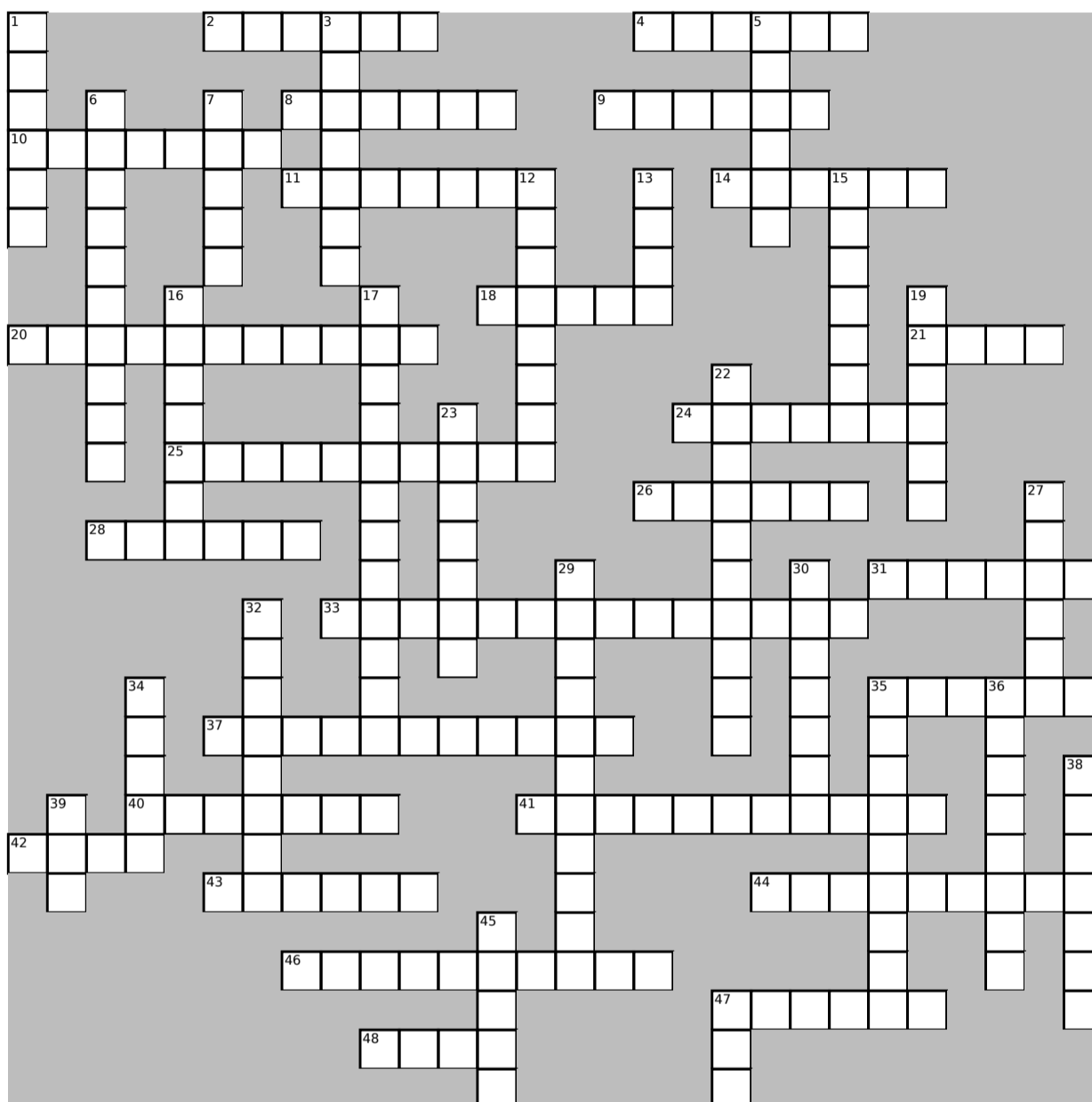


104 Easterhill Street, Tollcross, 1913, (an advert for the Olympia, which opened as Variety Theatre in 1911, is in the shop window).

Test your knowledge of the Bridgeton Cross area

with this specially devised crossword by Will McArthur of Glesgapals*.

Brigton Cross-word



- Across
- 2 McPhun's park by the green
 - 4 a warm street for a public hall
 - 8 main st - james st store, no more
 - 9 the bed was kept here
 - 10 nicknamed the silent death
 - 11 get your linoleum here
 - 14 small children of the ABCs
 - 18 outside toilet
 - 20 the land Bridgeton was founded on
 - 21 this street is a gem
 - 24 building funded by A. Carnegie
 - 25 young boy statue at the green
 - 26 fizzy drinks
 - 28 gardens for the people
 - 31 Caribbean polis station
 - 33 the toll
 - 35 a place for coal
 - 37 a place where linen was washed and bleached
 - 40 a fountain for the peoples of the empire
 - 41 old school in Carstairs St
 - 42 a bag for your sweets
 - 43 a cold street to live in
 - 44 steam condenser inventor
 - 46 this building takes some beating
 - 47 G.Parsonage society down by the river
 - 48 street of first established church

- Down
- 1 spinning mills
 - 3 brigton barbers
 - 5 a closely woven unbleached cloth
 - 6 Tullis St secondary school
 - 7 the trams garaged here
 - 12 old wedding ritual loved by weans
 - 13 the queen of schools
 - 15 last cinema to close in Bridgeton, 1974
 - 16 Mavour & ?
 - 17 oldest park in Europe
 - 19 famous old car made in Hozier St.
 - 22 Sacred Heart secondary school
 - 23 bread makers
 - 27 The Premier picture hall
 - 29 get photographed
 - 30 Bridgeton Working mans motto "learn from the past, xxx xxxx the future"
 - 32 cast iron pavilion keeps off the rain
 - 34 a bonny winding river
 - 35 East ends industrial heart
 - 36 this pub was top of the arch
 - 38 old railway terminus
 - 39 new Olympia House
 - 45 the toll has many ways
 - 47 HQ of the 7th battalion

OLYMPIA



**"Seven ways, three policemen, at Bridgeton Cross.
It was hoatchin' with people"**

7WAYS INTO THE 'TOLL'



Bridgeton Cross Umbrella, Coronation Day 1953.
Photograph Robert Currie



1894 - 1962
FAREWELL TO GLASGOW'S TRAMS
1894 - 1962
LAST TRAM SOUVENIR TICKET
ANDERSTON CROSS and AUCHENSHUGGLE
2nd, 3rd and 4th SEPTEMBER, 1962



L to R: Jessie, Sandra, Ena &
Margaret Findlay of 29 Marquis Street.



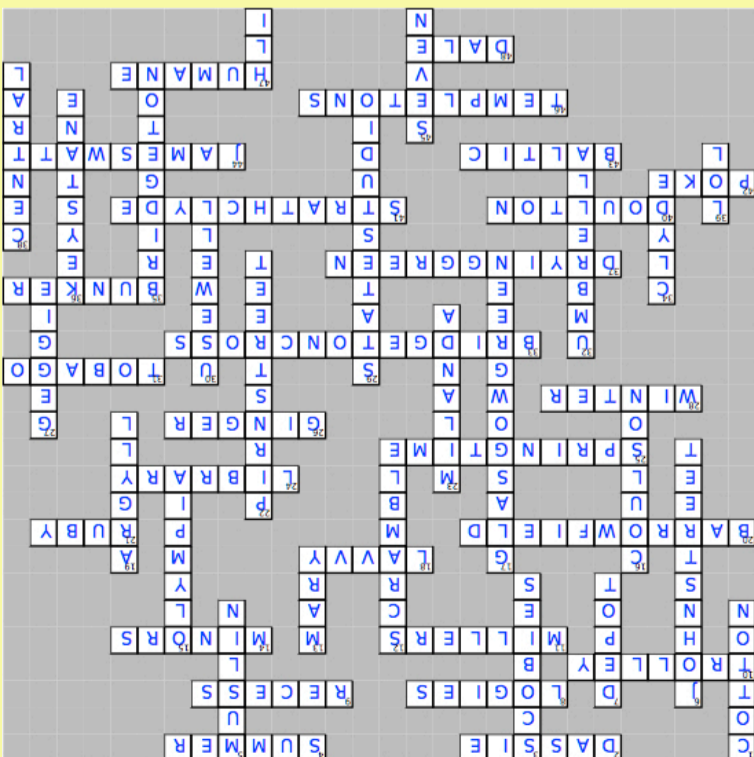
The McArthur Family, family wedding 1965



219 Boys Brigade band, September 1974.



John Street Elementary School, Qualifying Class 1949 (Robert Currie, back row second right).



'The Bridgeton Umbrella'

has been created with contributions from: Rena Brown; Will McArthur; Robert Currie; Donna Robertson; William Neilly; Helen Ross, Jessie Roxburgh, Annette Fowler nee Hume, Jim Turnbull, George Kane, John Brown, Jean Brown, Betty Muir, Robert Muir, Margaret Hudson, Ronnie Christensen, Ann Christensen, George Harrison, Moira Harrison, Margo McPherson; in collaboration with artist Janie Nicoll.

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