WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE
· HERITAGE TRAILS ·

Clydebank
Heritage Trail

GOLDEN JUBILEE
NATIONAL HOSPITAL

BEARDMORE
SHIPYARD

AGAMEMNON STREET

A814 DUMBARTON ROAD

CABLE DEPOT ROAD

SINGER
BUSINE

RIVER CLYDE

HALL ST

BRUC

TITAN CRAN

1 CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL
2 BRUCE STREET BATHS
3 JOHN BROWN'S SHIPYARD
4 CLYDEBANK RIVERSIDE STATION
5 OUR HOLY REDEEMER'S RC CHURCH
6 KIZIL MANSIONS
7 KROMER HAT
8 BAPTIST CHURCH
9 CLYDEBANK CO-OP
10 BANDSTAND
11 FORTH & CLYDE CANAL
12 ABBOTSFORD CHURCH
13 SHOPPING CENTRE
14 SITE OF CLYDEBANK SCHOOL
15 KILBOWIE BRIDGE
16 DALMUIR DROPLOCK
17 DALMUIR COUNCIL OFFICES

18 DALMUIR POLICE STATION
19 AGAMEMNON CARVINGS
20 SITE OF THE UNION CHURCH
21 CLYDEBANK LIBRARY
22 MORISON MEMORIAL CHURCH
23 FIRE STATION
24 SOLIDARITY PLAZA

Clydebank
Heritage Trail

If you wish to walk the Heritage Trail in one go, you should start at number **1**, Clydebank Town Hall, and follow the numbers. When you reach number **15**, Kilbowie Bridge, proceed along the canal bank to number **16**, the Dalmuir Droplock, then return to the Town Hall by Dumbarton Road.

The total distance is 3.7 miles (6Km)

FACTORY/
ESS PARK

13

15

FORTH & CLYDE CANAL

14

11

10 **12**

STANFORD
CHEMICAL WORKS

KILBOWIE ROAD

24

9

CLYDEBANK

8

ARGYLL ROAD

WHITECROOK ST

7

6

3

CART ST

ATLAS ST

4

CLYDEBANK
COLLEGE

CLYDE ST

5

ROTHESAY
DOCK

YOKER

Origins of Clydebank
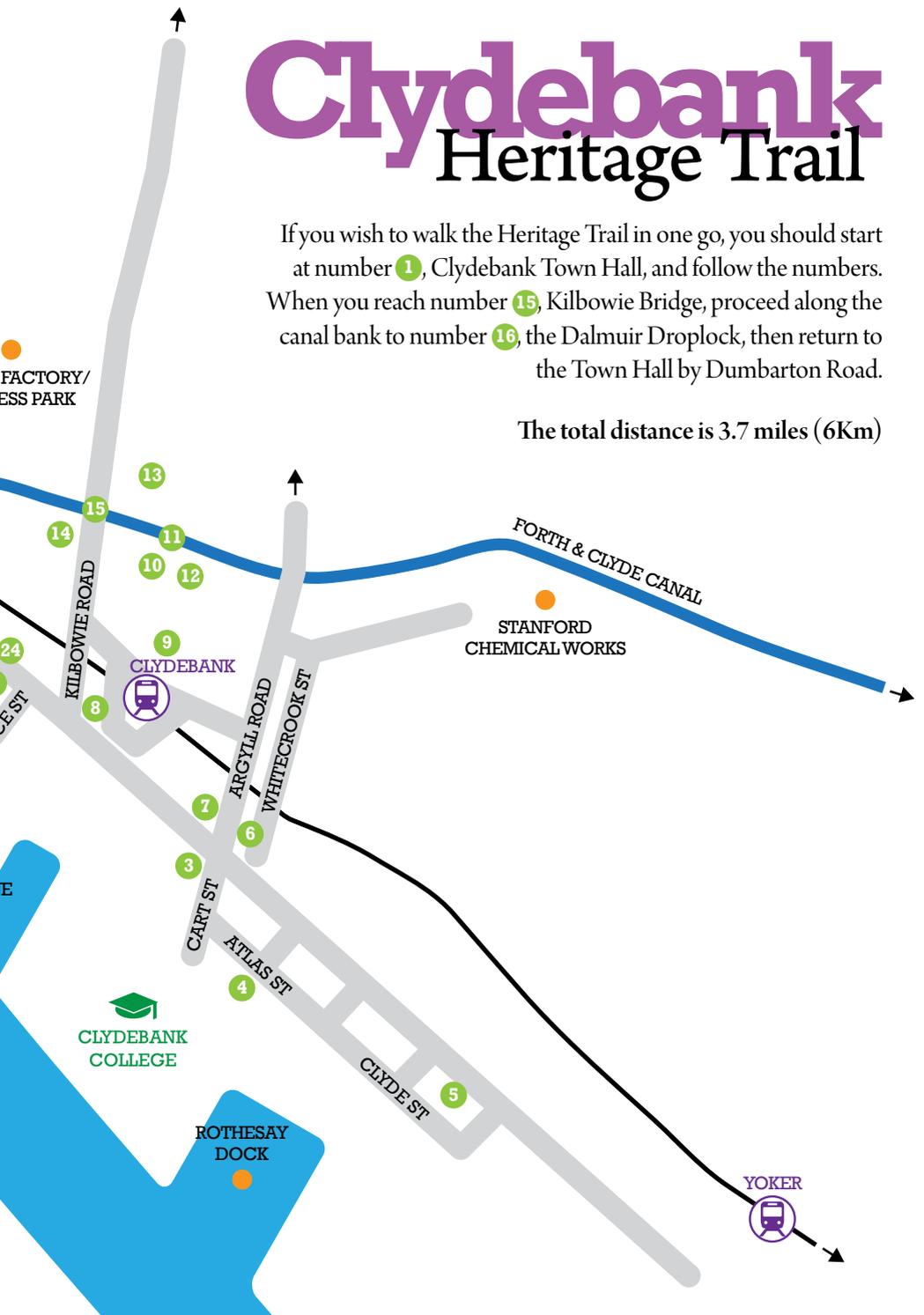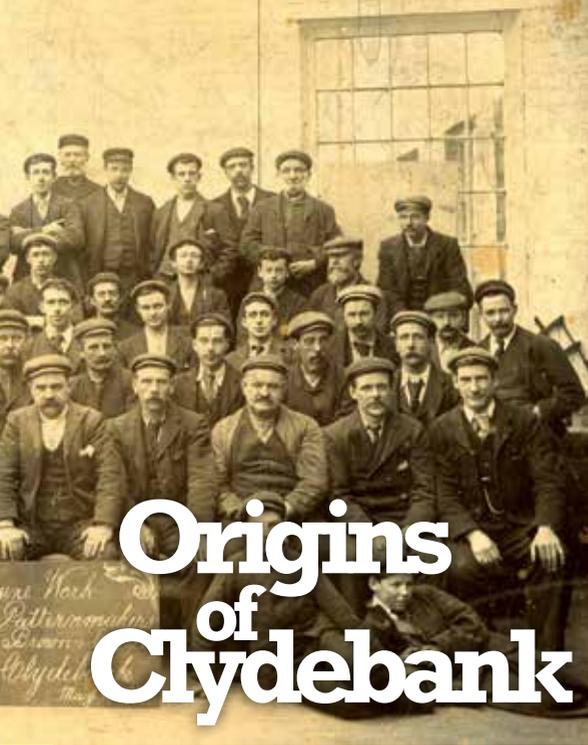
There is evidence of life in the area from prehistoric times. The Romans were here but not for long. They built the Antonine Wall in 142A.D. then retreated to Hadrian's Wall 20 years later. There were farming communities from that time and villages such as Faifley, Hardgate and Duntocher had begun to develop along the line of the Roman Wall. The Forth and Clyde Canal was opened in 1790 and at that time the only structures between the canal and the river were the Barns o' Clyde farm buildings. Clydebank began as a town when J&G Thomson opened their shipyard in 1871 on the site of the West Barns o' Clyde farm. Clydebank grew rapidly when the Singer Company began construction of Europe's largest sewing machine factory in 1882. Clydebank became a burgh in 1886 and by 1913 the population was 43,000.

1 *Clydebank Town Hall*

Designed by James Miller, best known as the architect of numerous railway stations including Glasgow Central. The foundation stone was laid on 23 June 1900 and the building opened on 4 April 1902. The clock was added in 1931. The statue of Mercury, the winged messenger that now stands on a plinth inside the hall, was on the domed roof of the clock tower until it was blown down in the January gale of 1968. The Town Hall housed the Burgh Council and then Clydebank District Council until the new council offices were opened in 1980. The Town Hall now houses Clydebank Museum.

2 *Bruce Street Baths*

This former public swimming pool, still known to many Bankies as "the new baths", was opened in October 1932. It supplemented an earlier pool, now demolished, in Hall Street on the other side of the Town Hall. Bruce Street baths closed in 1994 when The Play Drome leisure centre opened.

Clydebank Town Hall pre-1968

Queen Elizabeth II launched in 1967

3 *John Brown's Shipyard*

Started by J & G Thomson in 1871, business built up steadily, employing 2,000 by 1880. However it ran into financial problems and in 1899 was taken over by the Sheffield steelmaker John Brown and Company. The shipyard prospered under the new management and in 1907 it launched the *Lusitania*, which at that time was the largest ship ever built. As well as building ocean-going liners it also built warships including *HMS Hood*, launched in 1918. The prosperity lasted 20 years but following the Great War the yard went into decline. The gloom was lifted with the order for the *Queen Mary*, launched in September 1934. The *Queen Elizabeth*, followed in September 1938. The last great ship under the John Brown name was *Queen Elizabeth 2*, launched in September 1967. In 1968 John Brown & Co became part of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. It was bought by Marathon, an American oilrig firm, in 1972 and by UIE in 1980 but went in to decline and closed for the last time in 2002.

The shipyard's century-old "A" listed Titan Crane, the first electric cantilever crane in the world, is an icon of Clydebank's proud past and has been restored as a heritage visitor centre, open May to October each year. Queens Quay is mostly in private ownership with plans for housing and retail/leisure. Sixteen acres transferred to Clydebank Re-built, the town's urban regeneration company, for the new Clydebank College (opened 2008), and developing a waterfront business campus, new leisure centre and public walkway along the River Clyde.

4 *Clydebank Riverside Station*

Thomson brought their workers down from Glasgow daily by boat until 1882 when the Glasgow – Yoker – Clydebank railway was opened. Initially this terminated to the east of the shipyard. In 1896 the Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire Railway took advantage of the "Cart Cut" of the Forth and Clyde canal to build their rival line to Dalmuir via Riverside Station. The station building, now used for housing, was designed by Sir J.J. Burnet. The line was closed in the Beeching cuts of 1964.

Clydebank Riverside Station

Kromer Hat

5 *Our Holy Redeemer's RC Church*

Clydebank's first Roman Catholic church was set up in 1889 near the foot of Kilbowie Road. In 1895 a two storey building, which served both as church and school, was erected close to the present site. That building became wholly utilised as a school when the present church, designed by Pugin and Pugin, was opened in 1903.

6 *Kizil Mansions*

Built in 1912 for a bookie called James Dempsey. It is said that the building's unusual name came from a French racehorse. It has a beautifully tiled entrance, which sadly, in these security conscious times, is not accessible to the public.

7 *Kromer Hat*

This sculpture by Sue Jane Taylor, unveiled in 1994, is a symbolic "Man of the Clyde", a tribute to the craftsmen who made the best ships in the world. The man is wearing the Kromer hat, originally the brainchild of an American railroad engineer called George Kromer but now adopted by welders everywhere. Roy Callaghan, a welder from Duntocher, posed for the artist, much to the amusement of his mates.

Clydebank Co op

Clydebank Bandstand

8 *Baptist Church*

The first group of Baptists began worshipping in the public rooms in Clydebank in 1889. A decision was taken in 1892 to build a church in Alexander Street and this was opened in 1894 with Mr Joseph Burns as its first pastor. Services in the church came to an end in June 2006

9 *Clydebank Co-op*

Occupying a large corner site is the Clydebank Co operative building, which was designed by the Glasgow architects Stewart and Patterson and built in 1917. The Office and Co operative Hall, built in 1908, still survive in Hume Street.

10 *Bandstand*

The Bandstand, which was built by the Lion Foundry of Kirkintilloch, was originally located in Dalmuir Park. The park was opened in 1906, the ground having been bought with money donated by Lord Overtoun. The bandstand was gifted the following year by the MP, Mr J Dundas White. It was moved to Whitecrook Park in 1935 and finally moved to the shopping centre in 1983.

11 *Forth and Clyde Canal*

The canal is 37 miles long and linked the River Forth at Grangemouth to the Clyde at Bowling.

Construction began in 1768 and the first boat sailed all the way through in July 1790. The canal provided the main transport link from east to west until superseded by the railway in the 1850's. It continued to provide a useful transit, particularly for fishing boats, until the 1950s. In Clydebank, the Forth and Cart cut was opened in 1840 as a link to Paisley. The cut was never a great commercial success and it was closed in 1893. Part of it is now Argyll Road. The Forth and Clyde Canal was formally closed to shipping on the 1 January 1963.
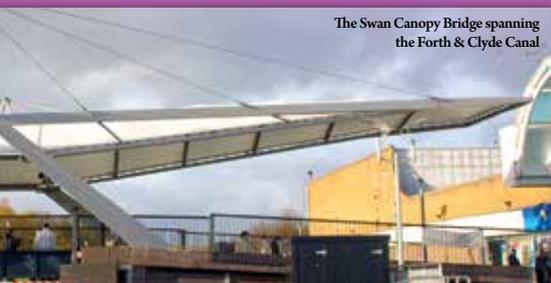
The Swan Canopy Bridge spanning the Forth & Clyde Canal
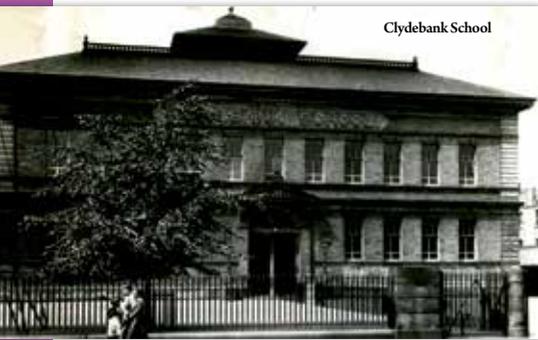
Clydebank School

12 *Abbotsford Church*

In 1873 Thomson built a canteen for its workers and allowed it to be used for community purposes. One of its early uses was for religious services and it became known as the "Tarry Kirk." In the 1876, The Church of Scotland built the first proper church in Clydebank, this being the St James' Church, which stood on the north side of Dumbarton Road at Whitecrook. The Abbotsford Church built in 1979, was the result of a merger between the St James' Church and Kilbowie West Church which was demolished during the development of the shopping centre.

Stanford Chemical Works

On the canal bank on the east side of Argyll Road stood the Stanford chemical works. This was actually Clydebank's first factory. It was built in 1864 by E C C Stanford to extract iodine from seaweed. It went on, under various owners, to make other chemical products including detergents. It was known locally as the soap factory and was there until the late 1940s.

13 *Shopping Centre*

The Clyde Regional Shopping Centre, to give it its full name, was started in the late 70s. Phase 1 was completed in 1978, phase 2 in 1982 and phase 3 in 1988. In 2003 it underwent a £21m modernisation programme which was inaugurated by Her Majesty the Queen on 4th July 2003.

14 *Site of Clydebank School*

Clydebank's first purpose-built school was opened in 1876, in Kilbowie Road, 100m south of the canal. It was rebuilt in 1888. The school was destroyed in the Blitz in 1941 and pupils had to be accommodated in a variety of locations including the Town Hall until Clydebank High in Janetta Street was opened in 1947.

Nearby there stands a memorial to Dr James Stevenson, Medical Officer of Health to the Burgh from 1897 to 1909.

15 *Kilbowie Bridge*

Kilbowie Road began as a farm track but by 1900 was well established as the main north/south conduit through Clydebank. Over the years there have been a variety of bridges across the canal. The original bridge was a bascule bridge, from the French word for seesaw.

Kilbowie Bridge circa 1910

Close to the bridge was Kilbowie railway station, part of the Riverside Line described above. For many years there were goldfish in the canal near to the bridge. No one seems to know how they got there but they were said to thrive on a warm water outlet from Singer.

Singer Factory/Business Park

Isaac Singer, an American of East European extraction, built his first sewing machine in 1850. It was patented in 1851 and was immediately a success. Factories were set up in America and in 1856, to satisfy the market in Europe, a factory was established in Glasgow. The Glasgow factory couldn't keep up with the demand so Singer decided to set up in Clydebank. Building started in 1882 with Robert McAlpine and Co. as the builder and was completed in 1885. The famous Singer clock, which was 190 feet high, was installed the following year. The clock face was later increased in diameter to 26 feet, making it the biggest in Britain and the second biggest in the world. By 1900 the factory was making 13,000 sewing machines a week. At its peak in 1913 Singer employed 14,000 people. After the Second World War, Singer steadily declined as the competition increased, and it eventually closed in 1980.

The Singer clock
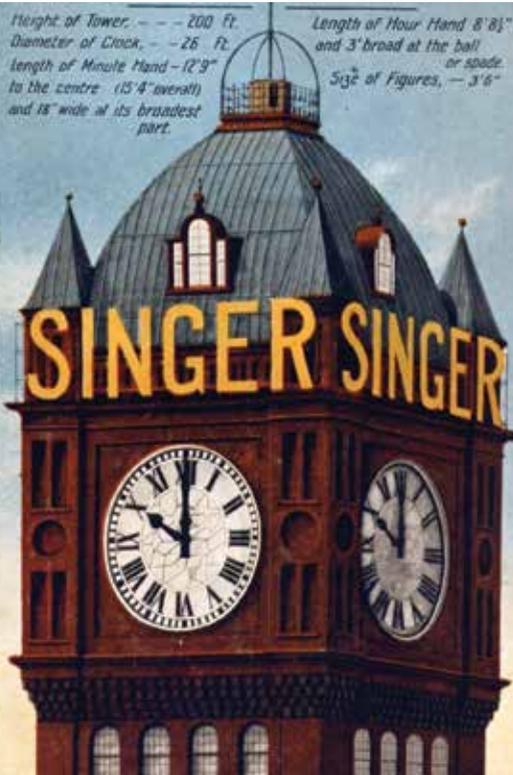
The famous Singer clock was demolished in 1963 during a modernisation programme.

With the closure of Singer and decline of shipbuilding, Clydebank witnessed high unemployment. In 1980 a Task Force was set up by the Scottish Development Agency to look at regeneration. In August 1981, Clydebank was declared Scotland's first Enterprise Zone. The SDA bought the Singer site and set up Clydebank Business Park. Radio Clyde was one of the first businesses to locate there.

16 *Dalmuir Droplock*

In 1999 work began on the MILLENNIUM LINK, aimed at reopening the Forth and Clyde Canal and its Edinburgh link, the Union Canal. The total cost of the project was £85m. Making the canal navigable again required the construction of many new bridges and the reopening of sections which had been piped. At Dalmuir where the canal passed through a culvert at Dumbarton Road, a raised bridge proved impracticable thus a unique solution was adopted. This takes the form of a "drop-lock" which is the only one of its kind in the UK. Work on the droplock began in January 2000 and was completed in time for the re-opening of the canal on the 28 May 2001.

Dalmuir Droplock
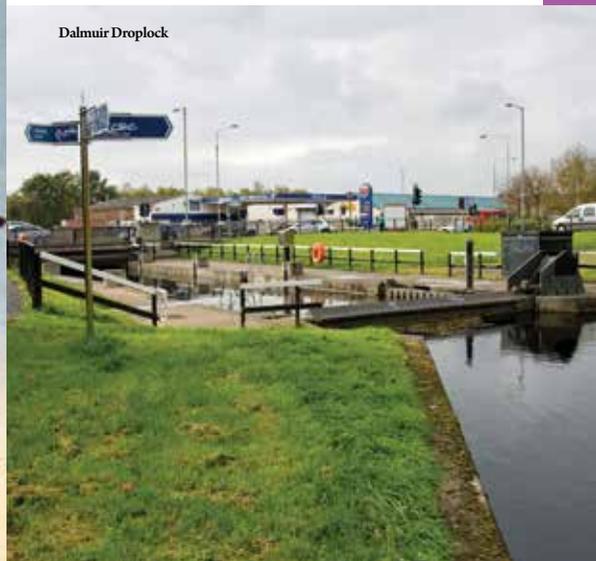
17 *Dalmuir Parish Council Offices*

Now identified as Beardmore House, this was built to house the Old Kilpatrick Parochial Board, which had its first meeting there in 1893. The Parish Council had its inaugural meeting there in May 1895. It was later used as a council rent office and in 1981 it was taken over by the Dalmuir Park Housing Association.

18 *Dalmuir Police Station*

Adjacent to Beardmore House, the station opened in 1906 and served the community until it was ignominiously replaced by a police box in 1955. It is currently home to West Dunbartonshire Council Trading Standards Department.

19 *Agamemnon Carvings/Beardmore's Shipyard*

In 1899 William Breadmore decided to set up a shipyard in Dalmuir. Work started in 1901 and by the time it was complete in 1906 they were ready to launch the biggest warship so far built on the Clyde, the battleship *Agamemnon*. After the First World War when orders for ships declined, Beardmore diversified into cars, motorbikes, bicycles, locomotives, aeroplanes, tanks and warships. In the 1920s, Beardmore went into decline and finally closed in 1935.

Stone carvings commemorating the battleship *Agamemnon* can be seen on the tenement wall on Dumbarton Road at Agamemnon Street.
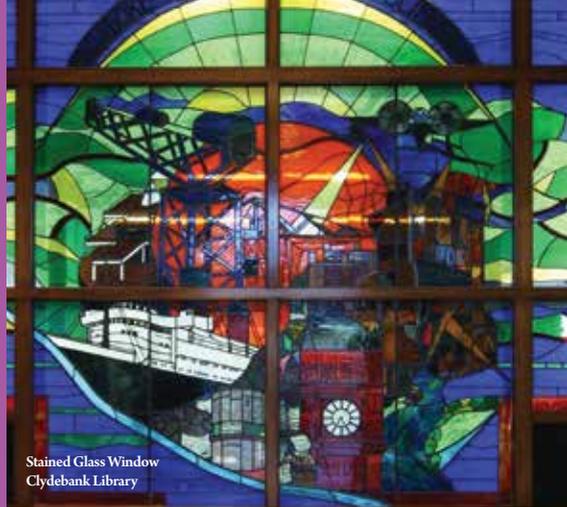
Stained Glass Window
Clydebank Library

20 *Site of the Union Church*

Clydebank's second oldest church was built here in 1887, on the site of a farmhouse with the wonderfully descriptive name of Standalane. The church was knocked down in 1892 to make way for the North British Railway line but was replaced by another one on the opposite side of the road. It was demolished in 1994 following a fire. It was known as the Cathedral of Clydebank.

21 *Clydebank Library*

The library, designed by A McInnes Gardner, opened in 1913, partly paid for by Andrew Carnegie. The library was badly damaged in the Clydebank Blitz but later rebuilt. The Library now has a Heritage Centre in the basement.

HMS Agamemnon

Union Church
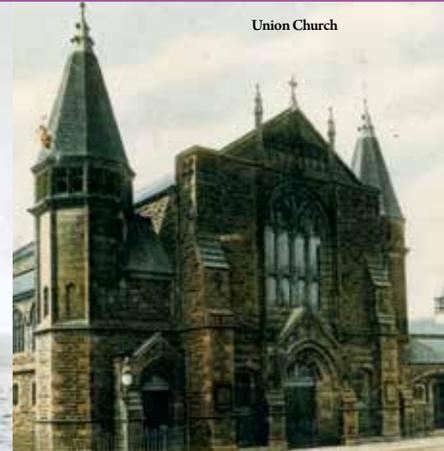
The 'Holy City' with Singer clock in background - 1941
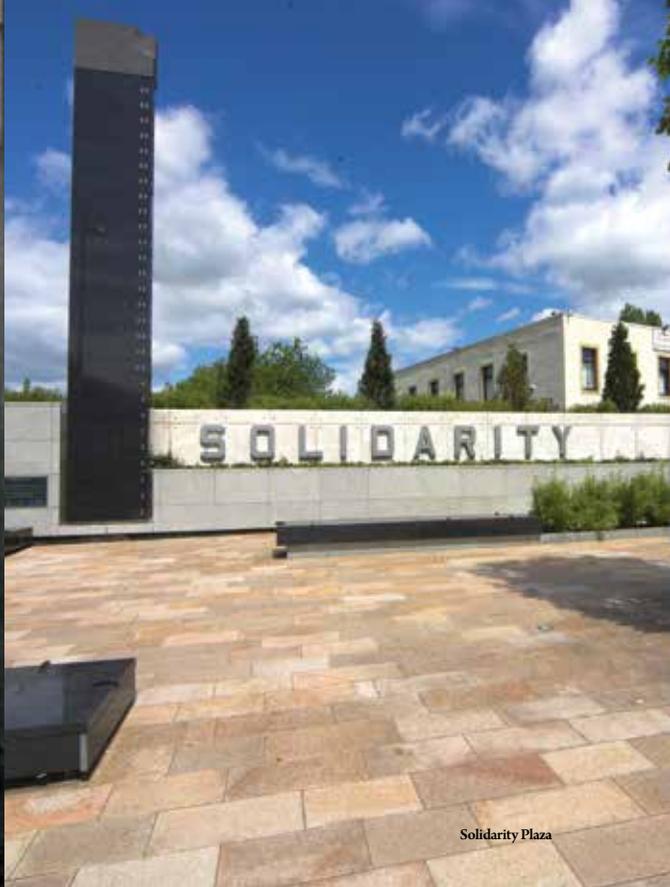
Solidarity Plaza

22 *Morison Memorial Church*

The church was opened in 1897. It was named in honour of the Rev James Morison who, in 1843, founded the Evangelical United Church, which is now known as the United Reform Church.

23 *Fire Station*

Clydebank Fire Service started in 1887 with premises in Whitecrook. It moved to Hume Street in 1897 and then to the Hall Street building in 1904. A full time firemaster was appointed in 1907. The Service remained in Hall Street until the present fire station in Kilbowie Road was opened in 1962.

24 *Solidarity Plaza*

The Clydebank Blitz was the town's darkest hour. It happened over the two nights of the 13th and 14th March 1941 when German bombers destroyed much of Clydebank. More than 500 people died and it is said that fewer than 10 houses were undamaged. While the citizens bore the brunt of the carnage, the two main targets, John Brown's shipyard and the Singer factory, were largely undamaged. On the first night a Polish warship, the *ORP Piorun*, which was in the shipyard for repairs, turned its guns on the enemy planes and so forged a lasting friendship between the town of Clydebank and the Polish people. Solidarity Plaza is dedicated to that bond.

This leaflet is one of a series of six Heritage Trails designed to guide you around some of the most fascinating local areas, and to indicate significant social, historical and architectural features. Each leaflet includes an annotated map, detailed narrative, and a number of images relating to the trail. Each leaflet will be available on the West Dunbartonshire Council website, at:

www.west dunbarton.gov.uk