

Helensburgh: The West Esplanade

Objective: To provide a brief guide to current and former features of part of Helensburgh seafront using a wide range of publishers.

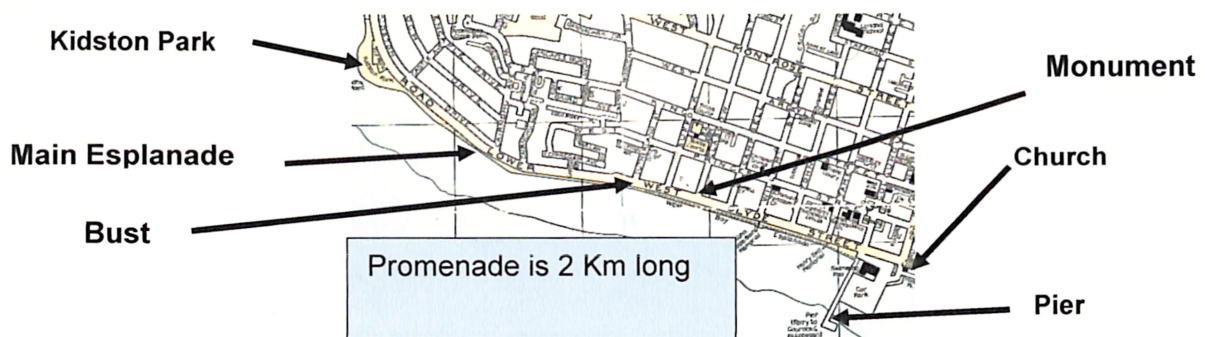
Plan: The postcards are presented in order of locations along the seafront, working from east to west. This is to make the display easy to follow and enable viewers to have an imaginary walk along the esplanade.

Introduction: Although advertised as a “New Town” in 1776, Helensburgh did not start developing until the 1880’s when a fleet of steamers made travel up and down the firth and river reliable and rapid. Many businessmen took the opportunity to either summer their families in Helensburgh or to move them there. The Victorian passion for energetic walking encouraged the development of esplanades and the work of public benefactors ensured the provision of attractive monuments and public spaces.

A View of Helensburgh from the Sea



Unused card by Raphael Tuck and Sons in their “Oilette” series showing a stretch of the esplanade .



References:

- Drayton, P. 1985. “Helensburgh in Old Picture Postcards” ISBN 90 288 3183 5 / CIP.
Drayton, P. 1990 “Helensburgh in Picture Postcards- Volume 2.” ISBN 90 288 4975 4 / CIP.
Noble, S. Ed. 2002. “200 Years of Helensburgh 1802 – 2002.” ISBN 1 902831 38 1 Argyll Publishing.

The Former Parish Church

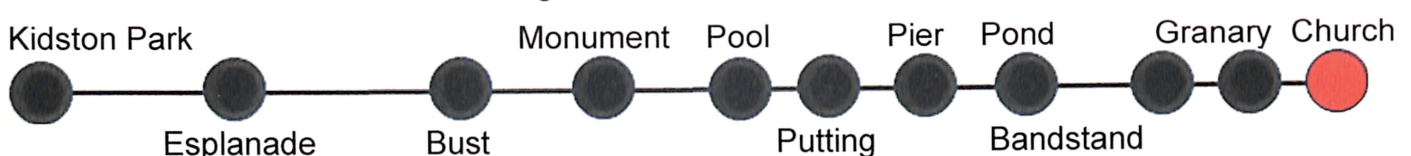
Built in 1846 when the other churches in the town became independent of the Church of Scotland and a new church was required. Charles Wilson was the architect. The tall tower was an important landmark for shipping and was preserved when the church was demolished in 1984 and a new residential block constructed in what is now Tower Place.



Card by J McCulloch & Co Ltd of Edinburgh in their "Caledonian" Series. There is a straight-line Helensburgh postmark for 27th July 1946. Printed in England and bears the wording "Guaranteed Real Photograph" on the reverse.



Card by M & J Brown, Publishers, Helensburgh. They were well-known producers of local scenes, Posted in Helensburgh in December 1919, destined for Glasgow..



The Granary

Originally built for the storage of grain from Mallig's mill, this was a malt barn from around 1700, becoming a garage in about 1900 with the addition of the lower extension. Later, in 1934, it became a very popular restaurant and bar. It was demolished in 1989 and there is now no trace left.



Card in the Valentine's Series with an undivided back. Posted in Helensburgh with an unclear date. The clothing suggests around 1900. There appears to be a fair in operation.



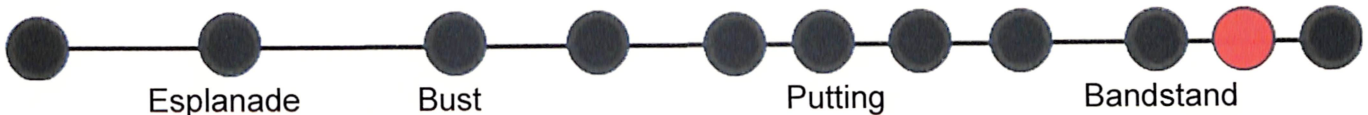
Unattributed card with divided back, inscribed in French, German and English, showing use of the former granary as a garage – hence post 1900 and pre 1934.

Kidston Park

Monument Pool

Pier Pond

Granary Church



The Breingan Bandstand

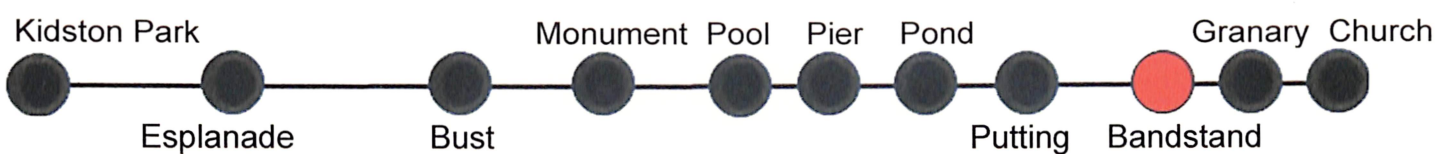
Erected in 1902 as a memorial to a popular ex – Provost Alexander Breingan (1863 -69) who had also been the local postmaster. He donated the field which became Helensburgh Tennis Club and was a founder member of Helensburgh Golf Club. The bandstand has long since vanished.



Card by the Philco Publishing Company (PPC) in their Philco Series, posted from Clydebank to Bicester in 1927.

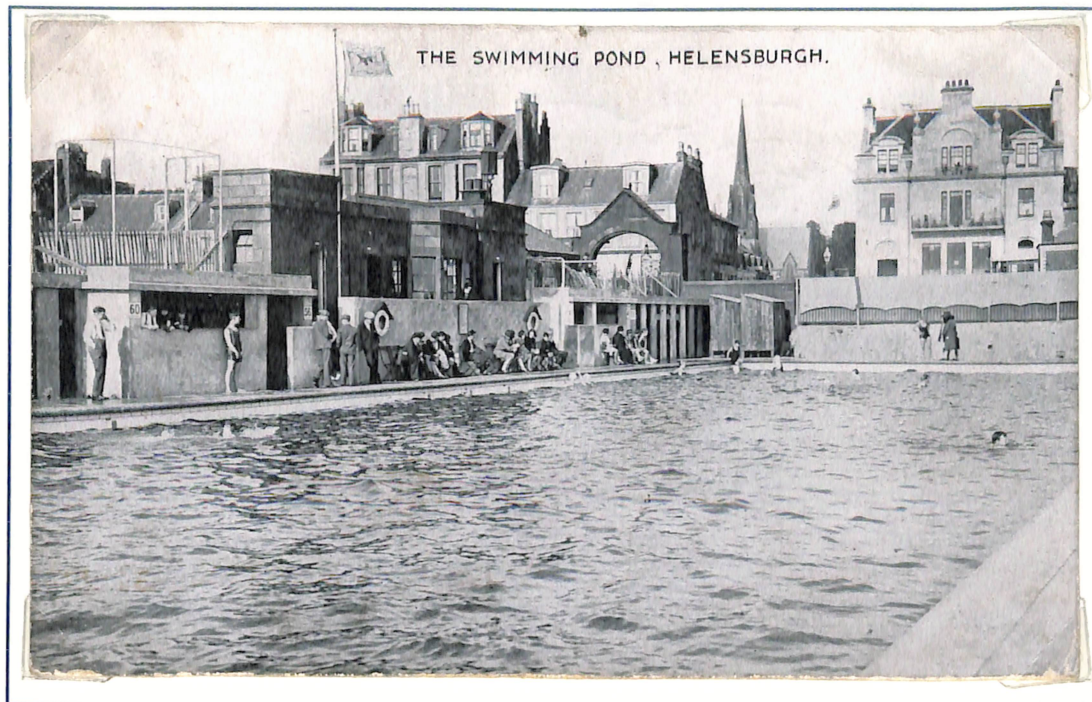


The Milton Postcard in the "Artlette- Glazette" Series. Posted in Helensburgh in 1908.



The Swimming Pond

Built in 1928 as a gift from Provost Andrew Buchanan, father of Jack Buchanan the actor. It was replaced in 1976 by an indoor pool on an adjacent site, and a year later the outdoor pool was closed. It was demolished in 1996.



Card by ETW Dennis & Sons Ltd., of London and Scarborough, No 30. Postmarked at Helensburgh in 1940. Bears the line "British Manufacture throughout."



Unused card by Holmes in their "Real Photo" series with the roundel for the "Heraldic" Series.

Kidston Park

Monument

Pool

Pier Pond

Granary Church



Esplanade

Bust

Putting

Bandstand

The Pier

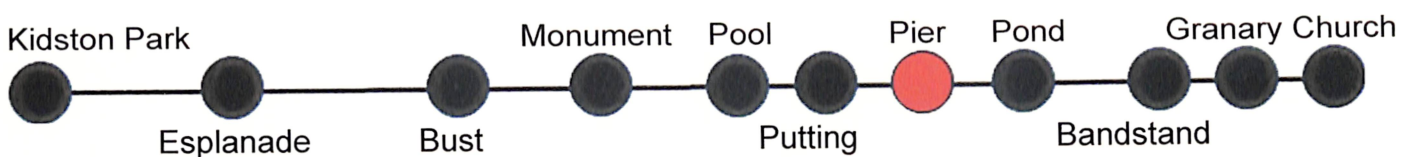
Constructed in 1816 and still extant, the pier is no longer useable by commercial vessels because of silting and rotting timber. Much of the area to the left has been infilled and made into a Car Park. A local group has major development plans and is raising money for its scheme.



Card by Raphael Tuck & Sons, No 1074 in their Helensburgh "Glosso" Series. Posted in Helensburgh in 1907. View from the east.



. View of the Pier from the west. Unattributed card posted in Helensburgh in 1931.



The Putting Green

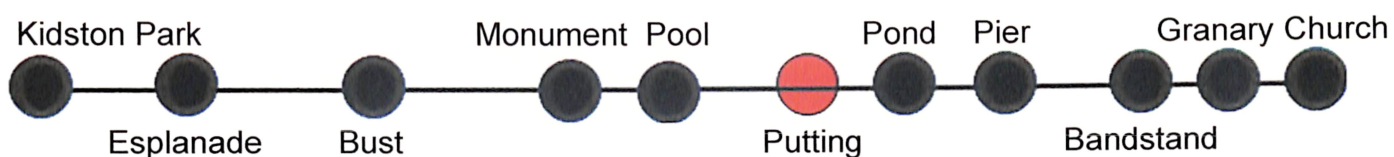
This facility proved popular right up into the 1980's, when staff costs, vandalism and the risk of losing clubs that were hired out forced the Council to withdraw the facility.



Unused card by Valentine's in their "Photo Brown" series No. 92850. The tower of the former Parish Church and the garage developed from the granary can both be seen.



Unused card by J B White Ltd. of Dundee in their "Best of All" Series No. A.7950.



The Paddling Pool

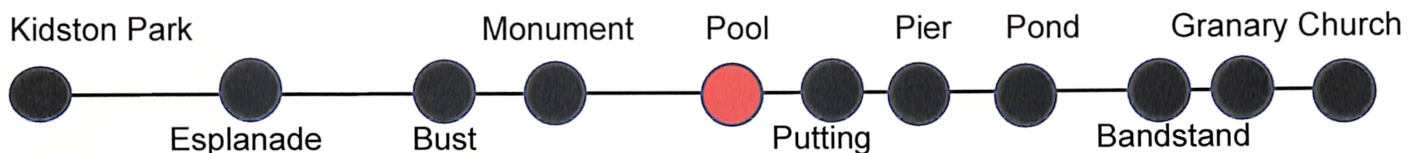
The wall for this pool seems to have built around the most popular paddling area around the foot of John Street where there is the outflow of the Glennan burn. Like other seaside structures, it was destroyed by storm action.



Card by Valentine and Sons Ltd., of Dundee, in their "Sepiatype" series. Postmark is for 1957.

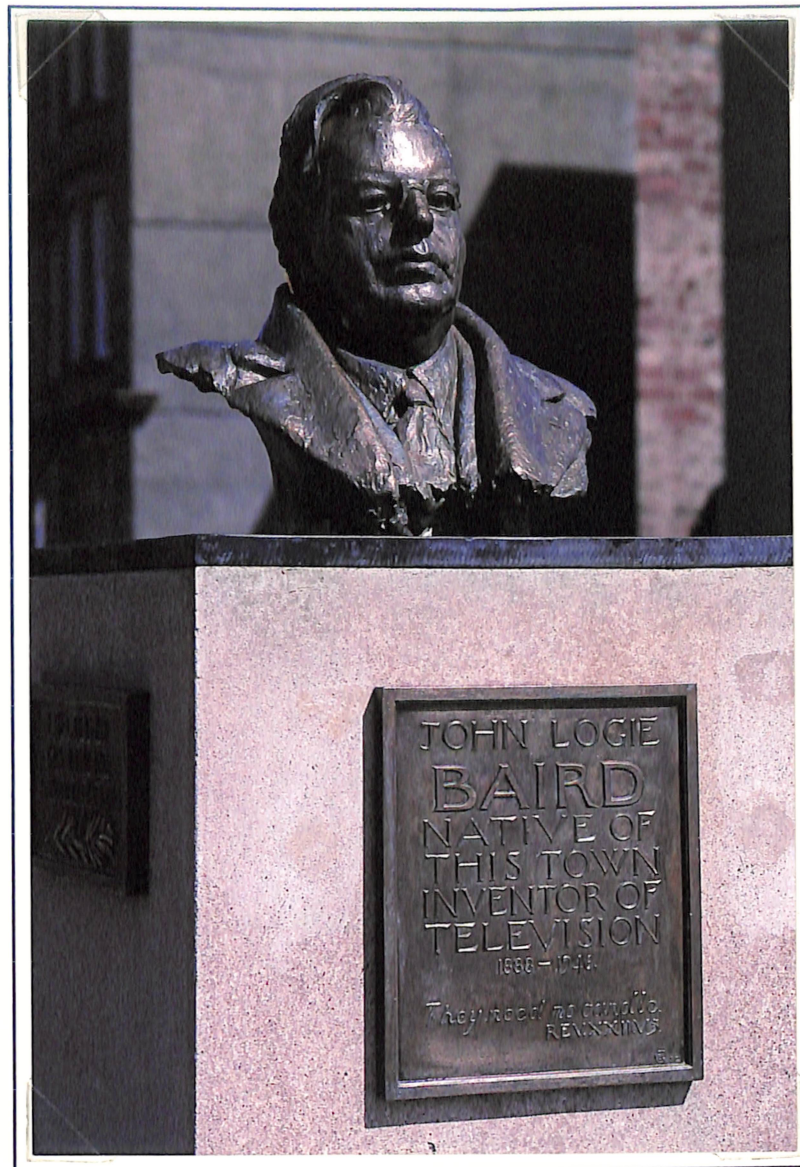


Unattributed card, addressed and written but without stamp or postmark. The Paddling pool is the white wall on the shore in the middle distance. Reverse has "This is a real Photograph."



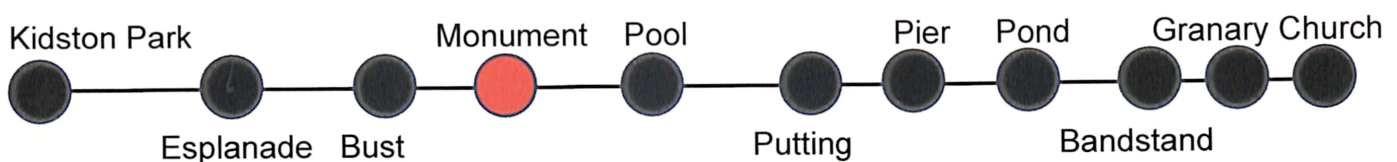
The John Logie Baird Bust

Bust of John Logie Baird by Donald Gilbert in 1943. The bust had been presented to the Town Council by J Arnold Fleming- business man, journalist and author - and was first erected in Hermitage Park in 1961 before being moved to the esplanade.



Card produced for McGilvray's of Helensburgh- a local tea room. Photo by R Cunningham.
Published by the Islands Picture Library, Tioran, Mull.

John Logie Baird was born and schooled in Helensburgh as a son of the manse. His father was minister of St Brides Church (now demolished). After studying at Glasgow Technical College (which has become the University of Strathclyde) and then Glasgow University, he went on to demonstrate the first transmission of a moving image to the Royal Institution in 1926.

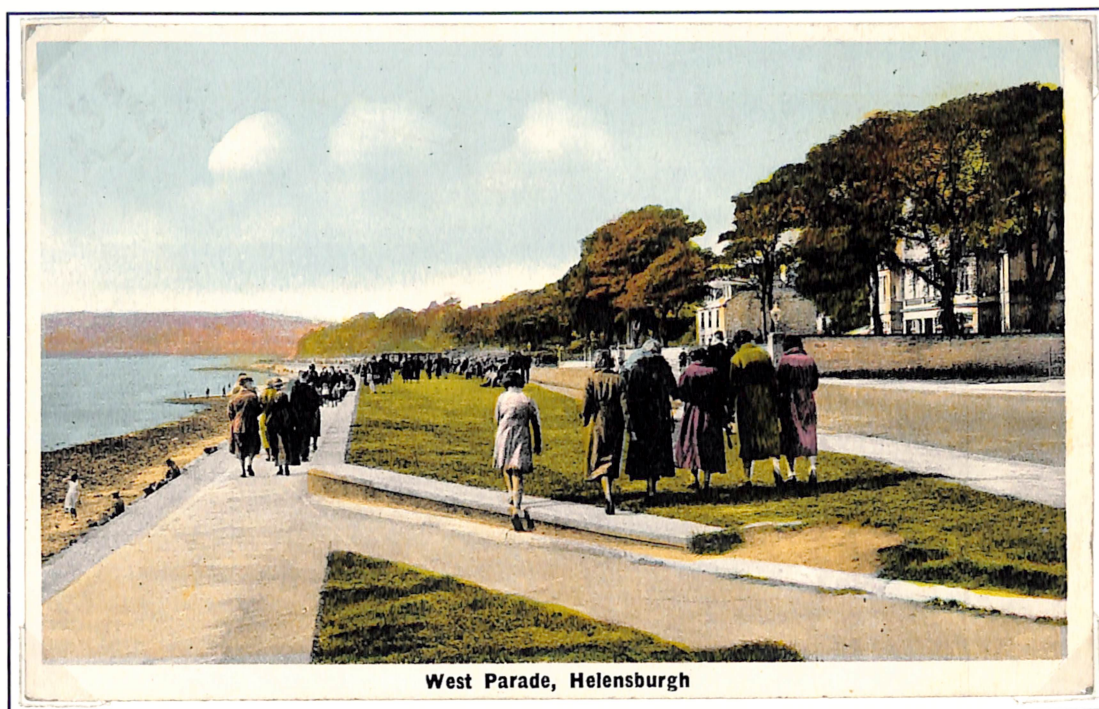


The Main Esplanade 1

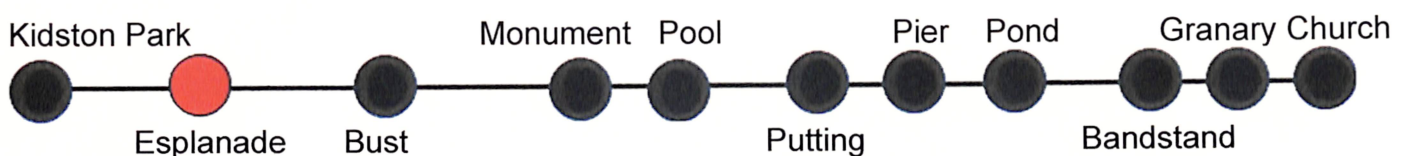
As the commercial district is left behind the esplanade sweeps onwards and interest lies in what can be seen out to sea. There is usually some form of nautical traffic and always plenty of seabird activity to enjoy. In summer yacht races are an enjoyable sight.



Unused card by Valentine's in their "Collo Colour" series, No. 217043. The esplanade runs from the town centre to the edge of the trees at the left of the picture- a distance of about 2 Kilometres.



Card by ETW Dennis and Sons Ltd. in their "Art Colloesque" series No. 34. Posted at Rhu in 1934.



The Main Esplanade 2

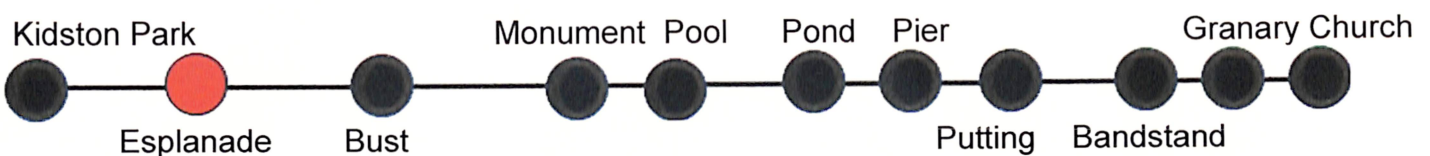
In places the seaward side is unprotected but for most of the way there is now a low wall topping sea defences. At times of storms it is not unusual for the spray to come over the wall and into the centre of the road.



Card by William Ritchie and Sons Ltd. In their "Reliable" series No. 1349 showing the last of the shops before the main stretch of the esplanade looking west. Posted in Helensburgh in 1904.



Unused postcard by Valentine's in their "Aurochrome" series looking back east to the main shopping area.



The Main Esplanade 3

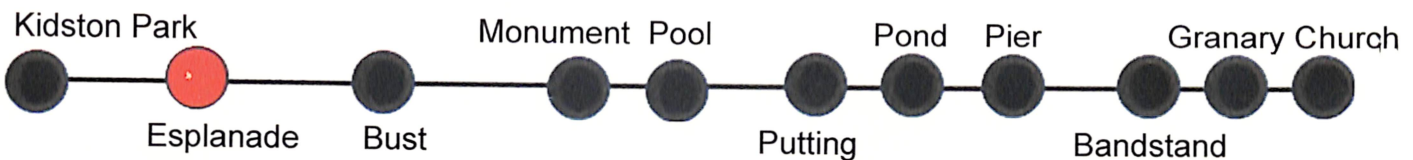
Here is an interesting pair of cards with what appears to be an identical image with the same people and cars but the top one is a war time issue and the lower one was printed later.



Unused card published by Miller and Lang Ltd., under licence from the Ministry of Supply. The Company was formed in 1905 and took over Philco and Co. in 1934.

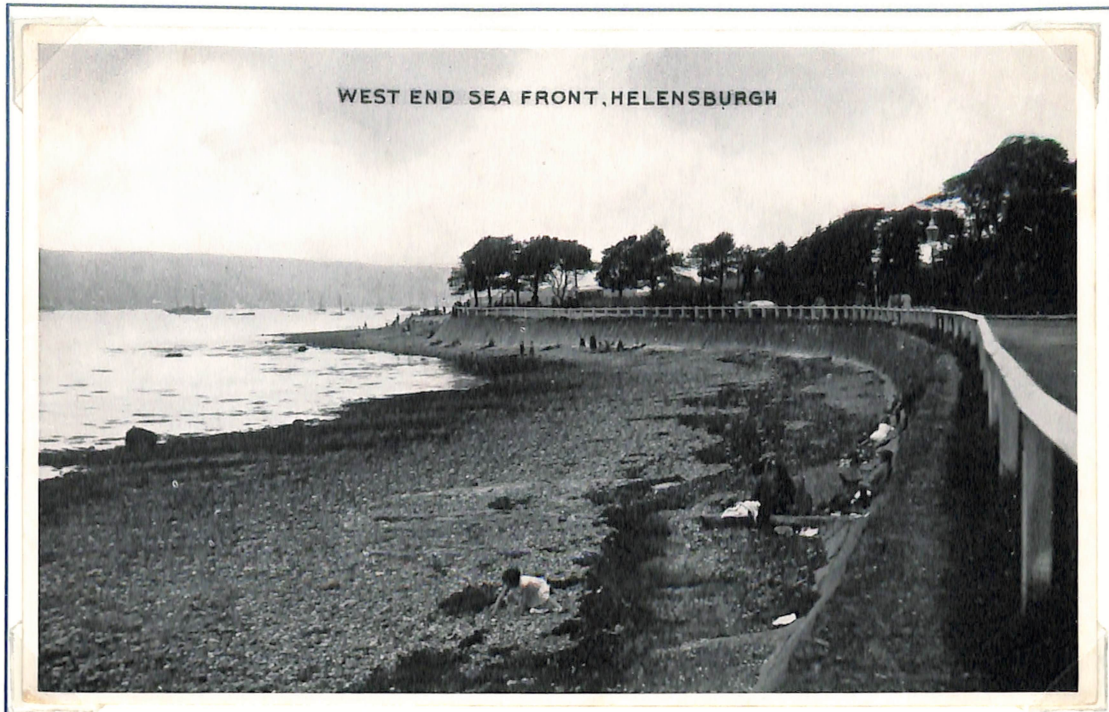


Unused card published by Milton and Lang Ltd., using a different logo and stating to be a real photograph.



The Main Esplanade 4

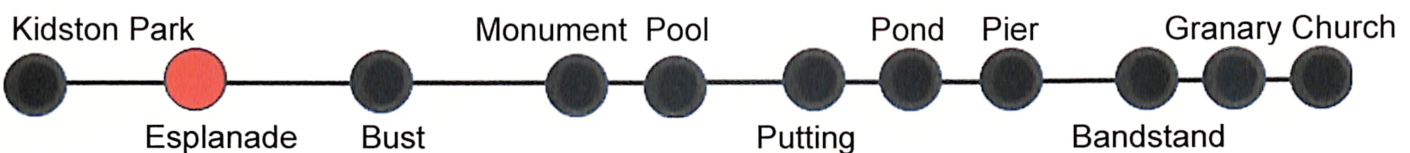
Another interesting pair of cards showing early picture editing.



Unused card by ETW Dennis & Sons Ltd. Showing the final stretch of the Esplanade as it approaches Kidston Park. There is a No 36 on the reverse.



This card is also by ETW Dennis and is numbered H 1004 in the "Dainty" series. It has the same view and most of the same people but one extra figure in the foreground. Posted in Helensburgh in 1938.

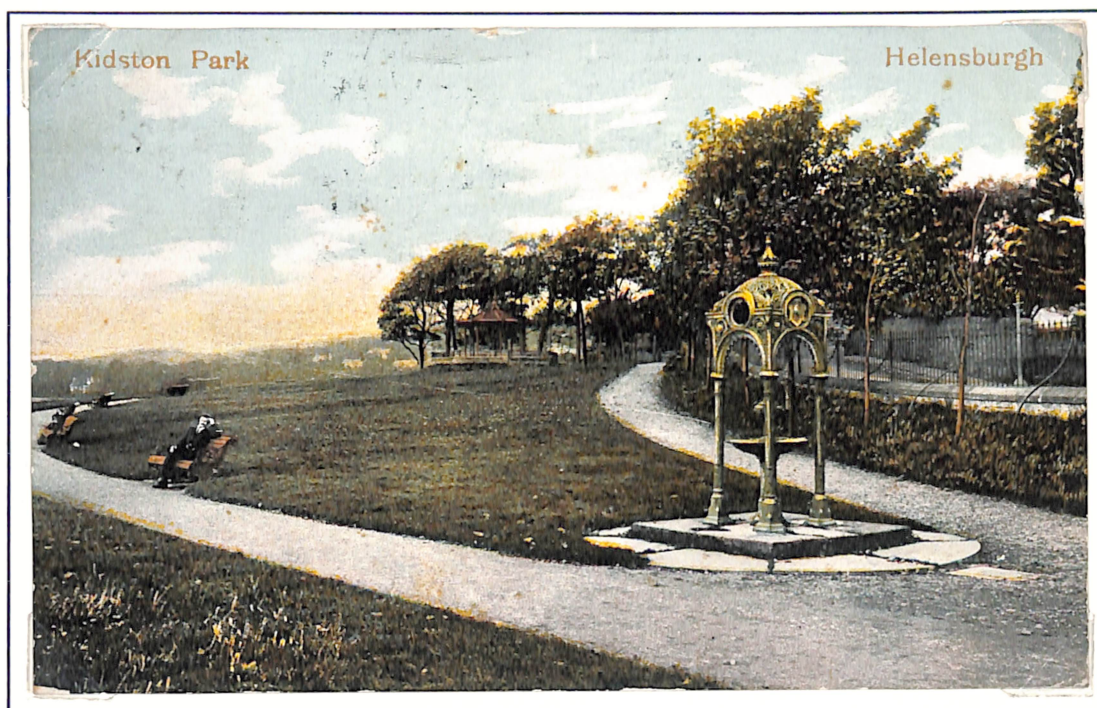


The Kidston Fountain

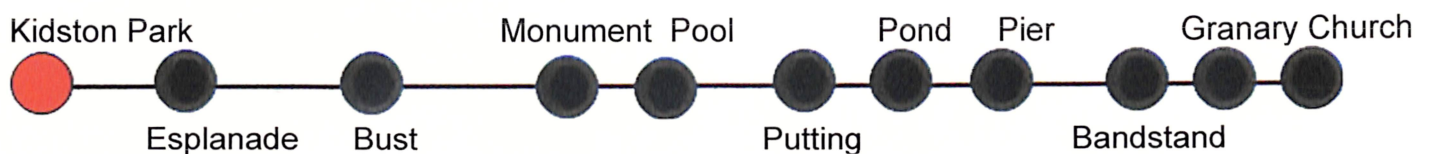
The Kidston family were major benefactors to the town having made their fortune in shipping and pottery production. Richard Kidston was Provost in 1836 and served again from 1846 – 9.



Card by Raphael Tuck & Sons in their "Glosso" series, labelled Helensburgh on the reverse with the number 1074. Postmarked at Helensburgh in 1905.



Card by M Wane and Co. Edinburgh. Postmarked in Kelso in 1906.



Kidston Bandstand

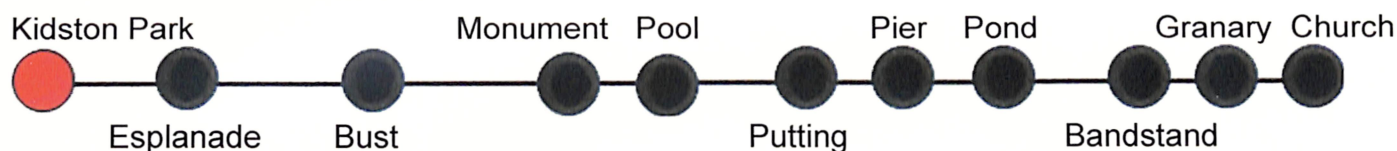
Richard Kidston's son William, in conjunction with Sir James Colquhoun bought the land to save it from development and gifted it to the town. Concerts in the bandstand were very popular including those by the boys from the Training Ship Empress which can be seen in the card below.



Card by WR&S (William Ritchie and Sons of Edinburgh) in their "Reliable" series posted in Helensburgh in 1904. View from the east.



Unattributed card with undivided back posted in Helensburgh in 1903. View from the west looking back into town. The fountain is to the right of the right-hand tree.



Kidston Park

The development of a modern play area here and the provision of a café has led to increased use of the park. It is also popular with local as a pleasant spot at which to eat fish and chips or ice-cream and watch the local dinghy's from the local sailing club "mess about".



Card by JM& Co. Ltd. In their "Caledonia" Series but issued in the name of Davidson Brothers as Series 512-4 and posted in Helensburgh in 1904. A fine parade of costumes.



Unused card in the "National Series" giving postage rate on the reverse as 1/2d for Inland use.

