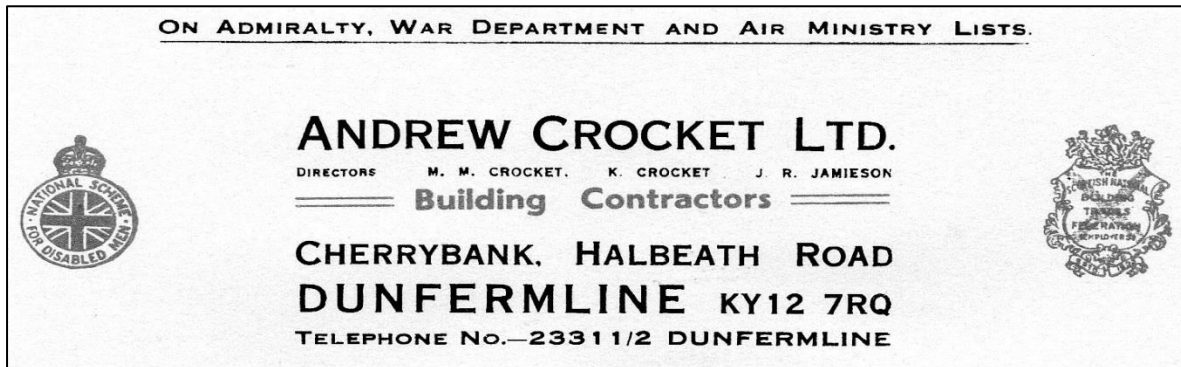


Dunfermline's Commercial Past

Andrew Crocket Ltd., Building Contractors, Cherrybank, Dunfermline



This business began around 1932 when Glasgow born Andrew Crocket, who had no previous experience in the building trade, went into a form of partnership with Crossford man, David Anderson. David had been best man at Andrew's wedding in 1929. For some reason the partnership was dissolved in 1937, with both men going their own way in the building business. Andrew Crocket then went into partnership with a time served bricklayer, John Russell Jamieson to form the business of Andrew Crocket Ltd., operating from Cherrybank, off Halbeath Road, Dunfermline. John Jamieson had also worked for Anderson.

Some of the building contracts won by Crocket in the early days were from the Admiralty, War Department and the Air Ministry. This involved work at the air base at Donibristle and at Rosyth Dockyard. In the lead-up to World War 2 they carried out building work at Myrend Farm, Cairneyhill, where the MOD had gun emplacements, and also built many air raid shelters throughout Fife.

After the war Crocket laid many of the bases for the hundreds of pre-fabricated houses erected in Fife. They also built premises at Rosyth, Helensburgh and Leith for the British Sailors Society. 'Welcome Home' bungalows (for war wounded servicemen returning home) were built at Cherrybank, Dunfermline, Milnathort, and at Lochgelly.

Around 1950, Crocket began building council houses for Fife County Council at Crossford, Kelty, Kincardine, Lochgelly and Dunfermline. Later in the 1950s the firm built Blacklaw Primary School in Dunfermline, and Camdean Primary School at Rosyth. They also built the new Cleansing Department Headquarters for Dunfermline Town Council on the site of the former Bothwell Linen Works at Elgin Street, Dunfermline.

Larger projects included the building, for British Rail, of the railway engine sheds at Halbeath; Philips factory at Queensferry Road, Dunfermline; Glenochil Young Offenders Institution, near Stirling, along with 70 houses for the staff; a new swimming pool complex at the Scottish Police College, at Tulliallan; and the C.I.S.W.O Recreation Club at Glenrothes; the Woodmill Miners Recreation Club, in Dunfermline; a Psychiatric Day ward at Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy; Craigton Maternity Hospital, St. Andrews, and alterations to Pitreavie Castle in Dunfermline.

At their peak, Messrs Crocket had a staff of some 230 tradesmen, ranging from bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, plasterers, scaffolders, labourers, and even a blacksmith. Throughout its duration the business operated from premises comprising offices and stores at the west end of Cherrybank in Dunfermline.

Many of Crocket's employees served with the company for many years, not the least being Andrew Whitelaw who joined the firm as a joiner in the 1950's rising over the next 30 odd years to the role of foreman joiner before taking on the position of general foreman. In retirement he was frequently called back by the firm to oversee working at many building sites. Mr Whitelaw can be seen centre in front row in Photograph No 1 and second from the right in the front row Photograph No 2.



Photograph 1.



Photograph 2.

Jock Nairn, who worked as a brick-layer for Crocket from 1952 until 1977, recalled some of the staff as follows:- Peter Mitchell, Jimmy Mitchell, 'Ginger' Lamont, Jimmy Crombie, John Hunter (who emigrated to Canada) and Gordon Berturelli.

Andrew Crocket died in 1958, after which the business was run by his widow Margaret, son Kenneth and John Jamieson – see bill heading above.

Kenneth Crocket had attended Edinburgh University prior to joining the family firm. His wife, Braunda, ran the company office for many years.

Crocket closed in 1981 when Kenneth Crocket and John Jamieson retired.

Note 1 – Andrew Crocket was born on 19th August, 1897, at 115 Smith Street, Gorbals, Glasgow, the son of Walter Crocket, grocery salesman, and his wife, Jane Leishman Crocket m/s Hunter. On 8th March, 1929, at 17 Albany Street, Dunfermline, Andrew, then a 32 year old commercial traveller residing at 59 Halbeath Road, Dunfermline, married Margaret Morrison Keir, a 32 year old typist, residing at 17 Albany Street, Dunfermline, daughter of George Keir, baker. The witnesses to the marriage were Martha Tulloch Keir, 17 Albany Street, Dunfermline, and David Anderson, Eastbank, Crossford.

Andrew died on 10th April, 1958, at 16 Cairneyhill Road, Crossford. He was 60 years of age, his occupation was given as company managing director, and the registration was made by his son, Kenneth Crocket. Andrew's widow, Margaret, died on 17th October, 1985, at the District Hospital, Dunfermline, after suffering bronchopneumonia. She was 88 years of age, her usual residence was 16 Cairneyhill Road, Crossford, and the registration was made by her son Kenneth, then residing at 'Keppoch', near Rumblingbridge, Kinross.

Mr Crocket's obituary in the Dunfermline Press of 12th April, 1958, indicated that he had been elected to Dunfermline Town Council in May, 1947, as a Progressive representative for the Second Ward. From 1950 to 1953 he was Housing Convenor and, from 1952 to 1953, he was Convenor of the Town Planning, Development and Property Committees. For two years from 1953 he was Convenor of the Cleansing Committee and was elected a Bailie in 1954. He served for one year in that office, retiring from the Council in May, 1955, when there was a re-distribution of the Wards. For a short period before joining the Town Council he was District Councillor for Limekilns and Crossford. For many years he was chairman of the West Fife Building Trades Federation, representing them on the National Council and on local tribunals set up under the National Insurance Acts. He was also a past-president of the Dunfermline Business Club and was elected honorary president of Dunfermline Badminton Club in 1954. At the time of his death he was chairman of Dunfermline Building Society.

Andrew Crocket's father, Walter Crocket, was appointed general manager of Dunfermline Co-operative Society in 1911, having previously held a similar position with Cowlairs Co-op. He held that position until 1917.

Note 2 – Kenneth Walter Crocket was born on 28th November, 1932, at Main Road, Crossford, the son of Andrew Crocket, commercial traveller, and his wife, Margaret Morrison Crocket m/s Keir. On 21st October, 1965, at Huntingtower Hotel, Huntingtower, by Perth, Kenneth, a 32 year old building company director, residing at 16 Cairneyhill Road, Crossford, married 36 year old Braunda Robertson, 19 Albany Street, Dunfermline, the daughter of Thomas Lawrence Robertson, retired bank manager. The witnesses to the marriage were James Sim, 38 Thimblehall Drive, Dunfermline, and Joyce Elizabeth Anne Robertson, 16 Cleeve Drive, Perth. Kenneth died on 25th November, 1998, at 'Keppoch', Rumblingbridge, Kinross, after suffering metastatic colonic carcinoma. He was 75 years of age, his occupation was given as retired building

company director., and the registration was made by his daughter, Michele Carey?, 23 Granton View, Edinburgh, EH5 1BW.

Note 3 – John Russell Jamieson was born on 11th November, 1908, at 82 Camp Road, Motherwell, the son of James Jamieson, a stone-mason and his wife Maggie Park Jamieson m/s Dalziel. On 19th June, 1936, at Viewfield Baptist Church, Dunfermline, John, then a 27 year old builder residing at 13 Howard Crescent, Dunfermline, married Hilda Mary Martin, a 33 year old tailoress also residing at 13 Howard Crescent, Dunfermline, the daughter of Edward Martin, gardener. The witnesses to the marriage were James Jamieson, 13 Howard Crescent, Dunfermline, and Dinah Atkinson Gibson, Strathview, Muirton, Auchterarder. John died on 20th September, 1998, at Bandrum Nursing Home, Saline, after suffering congestive cardiac failure and bronchopneumonia. He was 89 years of age, a retired company director, and the registration was made by his niece, Wendy C. Glover, 1 High Road, Saltcoats. John was predeceased by his wife, Hilda, who died on 13th June, 1982, at Milesmark Hospital, Dunfermline, after suffering a urinary tract infection and pernicious anaemia. She was 83 years of age and the registration was made by her husband, John, then residing at 17 Pitbauchlie Bank, Dunfermline.