

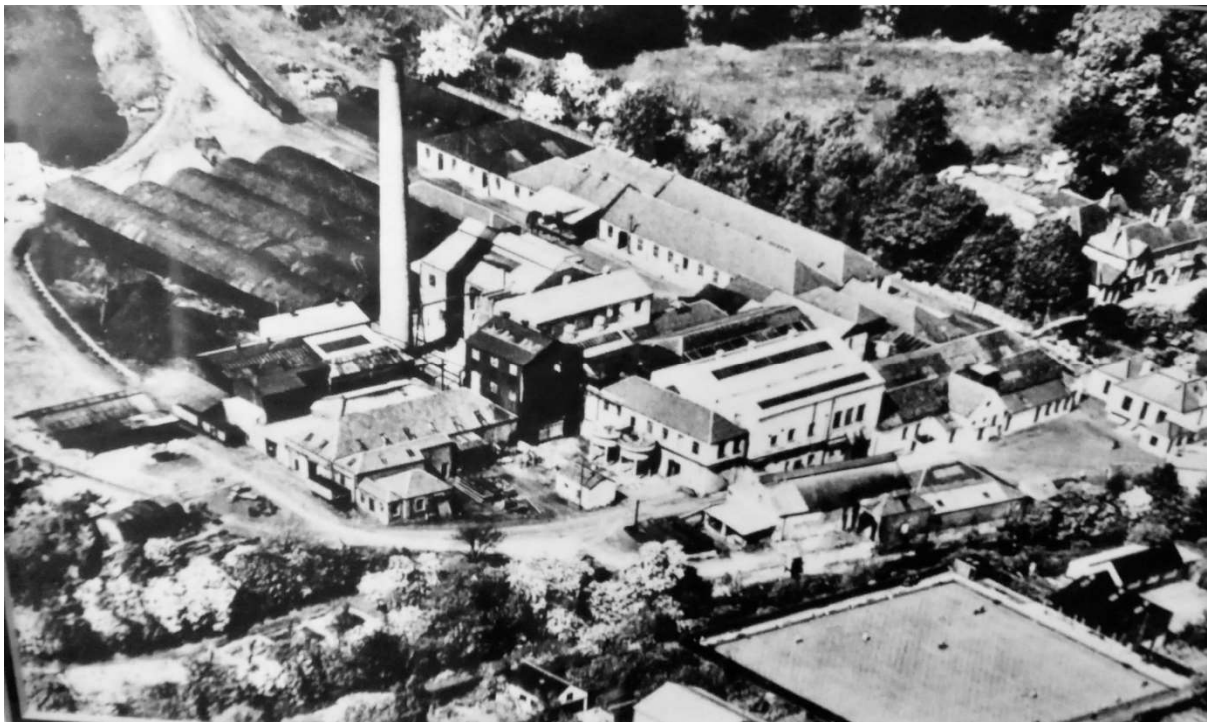


## ***THE YEAR OF STORIES***

### ***INTRODUCTION***

Beautiful Scotland, of which the Allander Road Gardening Group of Milngavie in Bloom is an It's Your Neighbourhood Member, has chosen *The Year of Stories* as its theme for 2022. The idea came from the fact that it is also VisitScotland's official theme this year.

The Gardening Group works with residents who live in Allander Road housing complex which was built by Milngavie Council (now incorporated into East Dunbartonshire Council) in the 1970s on the site of the demolished Ellangowan Paper Mill. The Group meet and work in the **Italian Garden** which was the centrepiece of the estate when it was built. However, after years of neglect, it was in a pretty bad state and it was agreed to try to bring the garden back to its former glory. This is a story of what was, and what is now, illustrated through early Mill photos and before and after pictures of the **Italian Garden**



*An early aerial view of the Ellangowan Paper Mill site  
with Claremont Bowling Club in the foreground*

## **THE PAPER MILL**

In 1870 Mr William White, a rag merchant from Glasgow converted a former cotton mill into a round-the-clock paper mill. In 1882 it was purchased by the Ellangowan Company with the partners Colonel John Birrell (see photo below) and Andrew N Bertram.



*Colonel John Birrell, JP was Provost of Milngavie from 1886-1892. Owner of the Ellangowan Paper Company in Milngavie, Colonel Birrell served on Milngavie Town Council for 28 years. His title of Colonel came from his service in the Territorial Army. A native of Penicuik he started off as an apprentice in a paper mill and by 1882 he and partner Andrew Bertram bought over the Allander Paper Mill changing its name to Ellangowan. He died in 1920 aged 63 years.*

1887 saw a second paper machine and modern machinery added and the Ellangowan Paper Mill became known as one of the most up to date paper mills in the country. The mills produced fine writing and printing paper for books and cheque books. The raw materials used were esparto grass from North Africa and wood pulp from Norway. In 1894 Birrell became sole proprietor on Bertram's death.

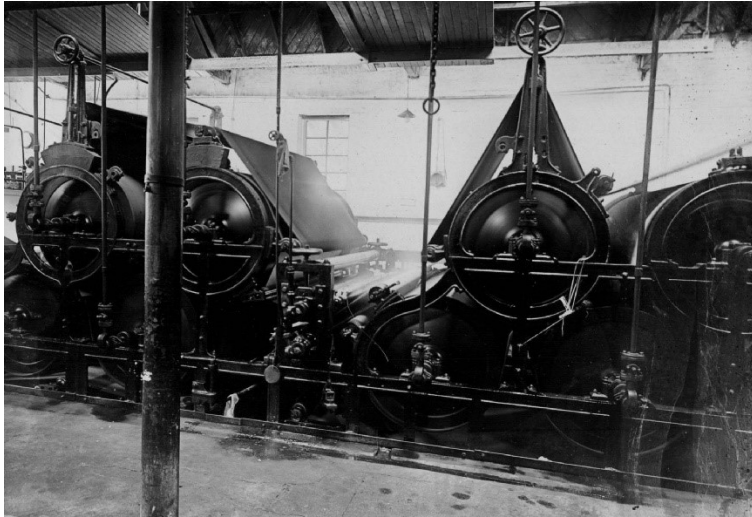
In 1914 The Ellangowan Paper Company Limited was incorporated, with share capital of £100,000 to take over the business. After the First World War the mill expanded its output to include paper for Glasgow cigarette factories but in 1935 it went into voluntary liquidation. In 1949 the mill was sold to the Clyde Paper Company which continued production for another 10 years. As foreign imported paper became more readily available, the mill's successes declined and it eventually closed in 1959.

### **References**

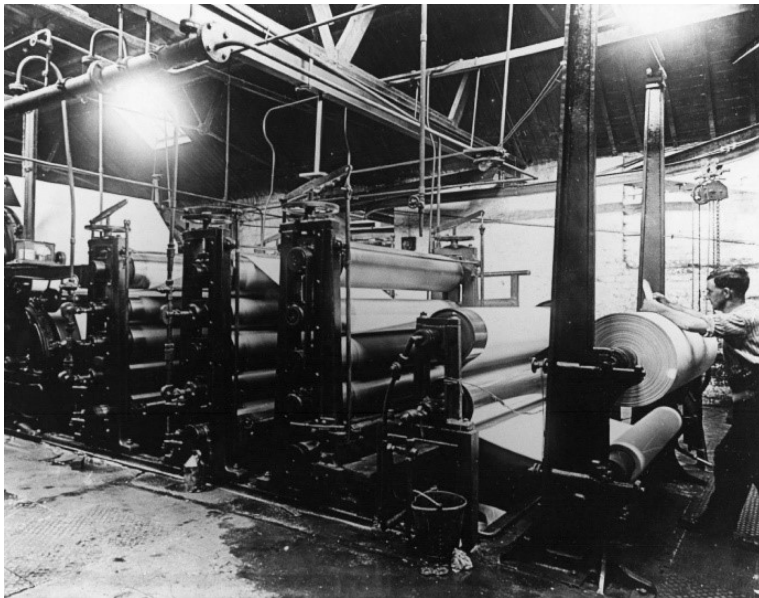
*In and Around Milngavie – Milngavie and Bearsden Herald*

*Milngavie: The Village – Nigel Orr*

*Old Milngavie – James Crawford Paper makers, of Milngavie, by Glasgow*



*Paper making machine at the Ellangowan paper mill. Originally the site of a cotton mill in 1790, it changed to a paper mill in 1879 after the decline of the cotton industry. Ellangowan Paper Mill Company bought it over in 1882 manufacturing fine quality papers for writing and printing paper. It was bought over in 1949 by the Clyde Paper Company.*



*The interior of the machine room. Formally a cotton mill, the Ellangowan Paper Company Ltd bought the mill in 1882, manufacturing better quality papers used for writing, envelopes and fine printing papers. In later years they produced the paper used in cheque books.*

*Ellangowan Paper Mill, Milngavie taken from Allander Road at a level crossing. The paper mill had its own railway sidings from Milngavie Station as this gave the mill the advantage of unloading the raw materials and loading the paper for distribution.*





*This picture was taken from Douglas Street at the bridge over the Allander Road Underpass. The houses on the right were called Allander Place or more commonly, Puddock Row. The roof of the large house behind, was that of the mill owner, Colonel Birrell.*

*Men at work inside the machine room at Ellangowan paper mill. The mill had two paper making machines that ran day and night producing quality paper. Two apprentices were assigned to each machine and in this photograph taken in the 1920s from left to right there are Alex McNeil, Hugh Cullen, Mr Wallace, Mr Sloan the manager, Jimmy Brown, Frank Laughtland, Andrew McClelland, Peter Shaw, Harry Getty and William Davie.*



The site was eventually cleared and the large chimney was demolished in March 1966.

A brand new much-needed housing complex was built by Milngavie Council and you can see examples of the houses in the pictures which follow. It's hard to believe that all that industrial activity took place all these years ago and then, after the ground was cleared, the lovely new housing estate was built with a landscaped-designed **Italian Garden** at its heart.

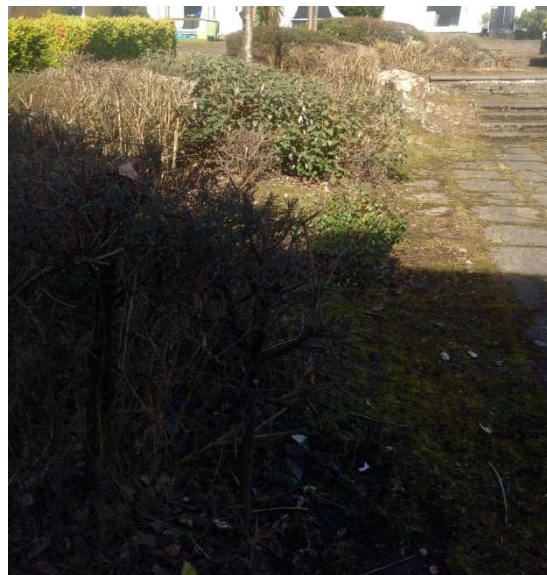
We hope you have enjoyed reading about how a papermill demolition site became a housing complex with an **Italian Garden** and how it has been transformed into the bright, blooming garden you now see today.

*Milngavie in Bloom would like to acknowledge that the information on the Ellangowan Papermill was provided by courtesy of EDLC Archives and Local Studies.*



## Milngavie in Bloom

### **Allander Road Gardening Group Renovation of the Italian Garden**



These first two pictures, taken in May 2018, are of the Italian Garden before it was tackled by the Allander Road Gardening Group. As you can see it is very overgrown and neglected with broken slabs. Because of this bad state, it was decided that this Group would start to slowly tackle the Garden in stages.

Because of the cracked and broken slabs at the entrance, the Group initially contacted East Dunbartonshire Council to ask if they could replace them and make the entrance safe for those with mobility problems. We were delighted when the Streetscene Project Officer of EDC agreed to repave this whole first section at their expense. The Group also made grant applications for re-slabbing the site, in two stages, over two years.

This spurred the group on to improve and cut back the vegetation. It was at this point that the Group entered the Keep Scotland Beautiful It's Your Neighbourhood Campaign, progressing through the early stages, Level 3 Advancing, Level 4 Thriving, Level 5 Outstanding and the Final Certificate of Distinction.

The Group now tackles other parts of the Allander Road area and has made many improvements by cutting back old vegetation and planting new shrubs, flowers and bulbs to add colour to various pockets throughout this area.



We wrote to all residents and several volunteers came forward, most of whom are still with us, and we started the work.



Staff of Mac's Adventures, a bespoke travel company in Glasgow, volunteered to help the group. The owner lives in the Milngavie area. They spent the day working hard and clearing the shrubs.



Things started to look better



First flush of colour



The Garden begins to take shape



The day we had the neighbours round for coffee





It's Your Neighbourhood Award 2019  
Level 4 Thriving

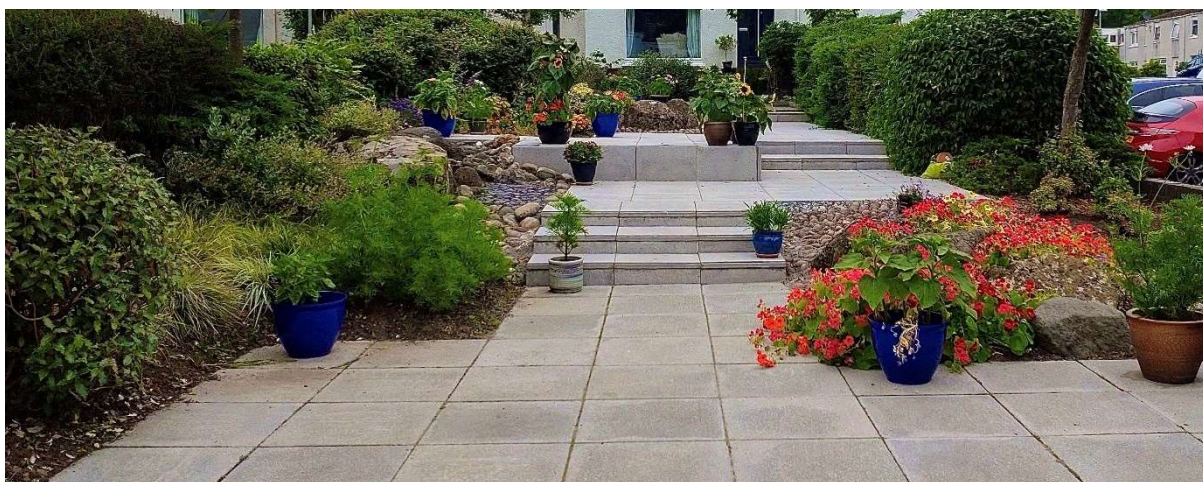


Royal Horticultural Society and Keep Scotland Beautiful  
Wild About Gardens Award 2019



Before and after renewal of the top area slabs funded by a grant applied for and received from EDC.





The totally re-slabbbed garden with new shrubs and summer planting for 2021



Finally celebrating our success in early 2022 with our Beautiful Scotland It's Your Neighbourhood Award Level 5 Outstanding and Certificate of Distinction