

## **Piers and Jetties**

### **Exhibition of Paintings from the Anderson (Local Collection) Trust 2023**

For the past few years, piers, and in particular Helensburgh Pier, have featured regularly in the local press and in the hearts and thoughts of Helensburgh residents. Now arrivals over water are welcomed to the town not by a pier but a leisure centre. Perhaps this exhibition of paintings from the Anderson Trust Collection, will help us to remember and reflect on how piers used to look and the vital purpose they served for coastal habitations round Scotland for many centuries when the sea was their main highway.



“Jeanie Deans” at Craigendoran  
*Ian Plenderleath*



“Helensburgh Pier”  
*Unknown artist*



Steamboat on the Clyde  
*William Daniell*

Few traces can be found today of the small jetties built by a scattering of smallholders before 1802, when the town of Helensburgh was planned and named by its laird, Sir James Colquhoun. An

example of a more substantial “jetty”, where sailing cargo vessels tied up, can be seen in the early nineteenth century painting “Helensburgh Pier”. The launch of the first steamboat on the Clyde, “The Comet”, built for Henry Bell of the Bath’s Hotel (later Queen’s Court) marked a significant increase in marine traffic and prosperity for the town, a period that is well represented in the paintings on view such as William Daniell’s “Steamboat on the Clyde”. A further boost to the importance of Helensburgh came in 1858 when the North British Railway Company linked the town with Glasgow. At first trains terminated at Craigendoran where the pier formed a convenient connection with the paddle steamers that ferried city dwellers “doon the water” on popular day trips to Rothesay and other coastal holiday towns. Paintings in the exhibition record the various stages of this pier, over a hundred years, from the small jetty in Rosa Templeton’s “Pier at Craigendoran”, then as a busy terminal for paddle steamer traffic, to its decline in the 1970’s so powerfully illustrated in Ailsa Tanner’s linoprint (in the case).

A number of the works displayed here were among the paintings in Nance Anderson’s original collection of local scenes, which she bequeathed to the people of Helensburgh on her death in 1980, and which later formed the nucleus of the Anderson (Local Collection) Trust. A keen sailor herself, she would have been familiar, from personal experience, with many of the points of arrival and departure on the shores of this area and, I think, would have enjoyed this exhibition.

*M-J.S*