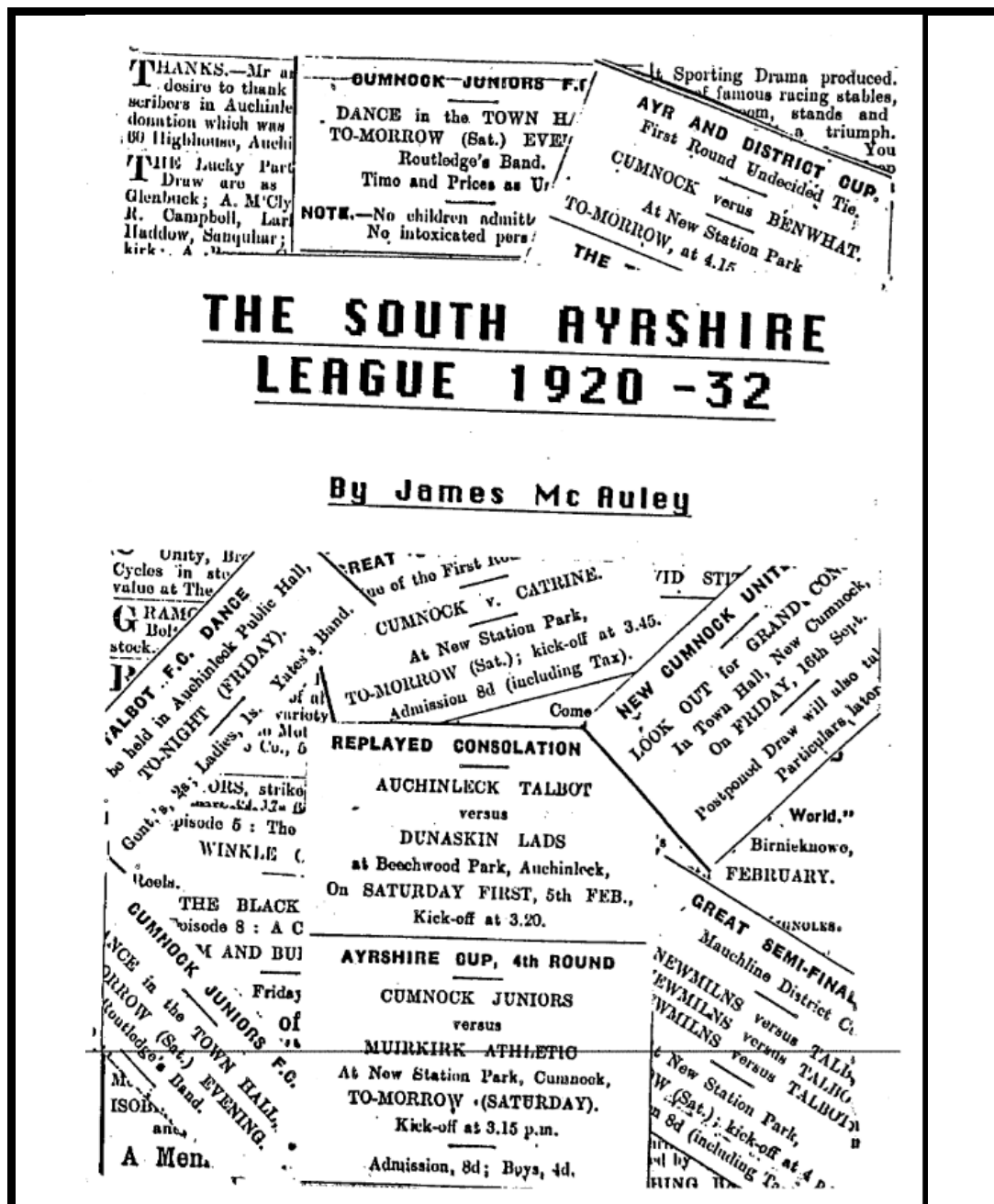


# The South Ayrshire Junior League 1920-1932

by  
James McAuley

In the early 1990s, Jim McCauley published a small booklet about the history of the South Ayrshire Junior League. Long out of print and very rare, Jim has allowed me to post it here to let a wider audience view this work.



AT A GLANCE

The Ayrshire Southern League's championship winners and runners-up and all the top office bearers.

WINNERS

1920-21 Auchinleck Talbot  
1921-22 New Cumnock United  
1922-23 New Cumnock United  
1923-24 New Cumnock United  
1924-25 Muirkirk Athletic  
1925-26 Cumnock Juniors  
1926-27 Lugar Boswell Thistle  
1927-28 Croneberry Eglington  
1928-29 Kello Rovers  
1929-30 Cumnock Juniors  
1930-31 Glenafton Athletic  
1931-32 Glenafton Athletic

RUNNERS UP

New Cumnock United  
Auchinleck Talbot  
Auchinleck Talbot  
Cumnock Juniors  
Kello Rovers  
Muirkirk Athletic  
Burnfoothill Primrose  
Kello Rovers  
Croneberry Eglington  
Kello Rovers  
Cumnock Juniors  
Glenbuck Cherrypickers

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE SHIELD

WINNERS

1923-24 Muirkirk Athletic  
1924-25 Kello Rovers

RUNNERS UP

Auchinleck Talbot  
New Cumnock United

SAL TOP OFFICE BEARERS

PRESIDENT & CLUB

1920-21 Mr Anderson (Muirkirk Athletic)  
1921-22 Mr Murphy (Talbot)  
1922-23 Mr Gibson (Glenbuck)  
1923-24 Mr McCaughtrie (Cumnock)  
1924-25 Mr Irving (Kello Rovers)  
1925-26 Mr Mullen (Croneberry)  
1926-27 Mr Anderson (Muirkirk)  
1927-28 Mr Lindsay (Talbot)  
1928-29 Mr Montieth (Kello)  
1929-30 Mr McCartney (Croneberry)  
1930-31 Mr Tanner (Talbot)  
1931-32 Mr Lamont (Cumnock)

VICE PRESIDENT & CLUB

Mr Murphy (Talbot)  
Mr Pollock (New Cumnock)  
Mr McMillan (Cumnock)\*\*\*  
Mr Irving (Kello Rovers)  
Mr Mullen (Croneberry)  
Mr Anderson (Muirkirk)  
Mr Lindsay (Talbot)  
Mr Montieth (Kello)  
Mr Torrance (Croneberry)  
Mr Duff (Irvine LMS)  
Mr Black (Kello)  
Mr McCann (Glenafton)

\*\*\*\* Mr McMillan retired during the season. to be replaced by Mr Tom McCaughtrie from Cumnock Juniors.

To My Darling Mother

J. McAuley (Author)

## INTRODUCTION.

In 1920 the Ayrshire Football Association prompted all county FA's to put more emphasis on league football. In the same year the South Ayrshire League and the Western League came into being.

During the Southern League's twelve years of providing league football to the teams of the Cumnock district and later the Ayr district it was always overshadowed by the Western League, this is why the SAL was a little known force in Junior football.

The Western League joined the Intermediate rebels in 1927, while the SAL remained loyal to the SJFA throughout. It never reached any great heights, and it never prospered, but it did become a breeding ground for Talbot, Cumnock, Kello, Lugar, and Glenafton, undoubtedly five of Scotland's greatest Junior clubs.

When the SAL was formed South Ayrshire was the coal mining heartland of Ayrshire, and the miners were ruled by a fist of iron. A six day week was part of your agreement to the mine owner, and this included a Saturday. The mining company gave you a job, and in turn you gave them your life. You stayed in their houses, you used their shop, in fact the mining company in some way or another got back all the wages they paid you. Life was cheap in this part of history, you only need to browse amongst the headstones in any South Ayrshire cemetery to find an abundance of wasted life, young and old who became another nameless face in South Ayrshire's numerous pit disasters.

One of the greatest escapes from this life of drudgery was the game of football, and the South spawned many great players because a step up to senior grade broke the shackles that tied you to a miners life. But then again the pits also had a say in the football, the biggest being the burden of working on a Saturday. To read this booklet you have to understand that games had to be played with 3.30 to 4pm kick-offs, and in the winter months this was impossible during the early nights. This was the main reason why league football wasn't popular in the South, and why many of the SAL leagues were never completed. The South clubs did find away round this for cup matches but it meant paying a miners Saturday shift so that he could play. There was no way the clubs would do this for league games, because they just didn't have the pulling power of a good cup tie.

In this booklet what is about to unfold is little more than survival, it borders on the farcical, it's tinged with sadness as we read about the end of the great Glenbuck and Croneberry, but one good thing to come from it is the fact that the SAL has now found a place in history where it belongs. In my view if there hadn't been a South Ayrshire League then I think this part of Ayrshire would be missing a few top Junior clubs, it's as simple as that.

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## THANK YOU

To the staff of the Cumnock Chronicle who made researching this booklet a whole lot easier.

### THE BEGINNING

On the 23rd of July 1920 after the league football demand of the AJFA, the Cumnock Chronicle announced that a new Junior league was to come into effect in the Cumnock district. It was to be called the South Ayrshire League so to disassociate itself from the Cumnock and Mauchline FA and its old District League. The first meeting was to take place in the Royal Hotel in Cumnock on the 31st of July 1920 and any club interested in joining should send a representative. At the meeting on the night, members of Cumnock Juniors, Auchinleck Talbot, Catrine Juniors, Muirkirk Athletic, the newly formed New Cumnock United, and Kello Rovers who had just turned down the chance to join the Dumfries and Galloway FA were in attendance, all showing interest in the new league set up.

From those present the new league elected it's first office bearers these being:

President.....	Mr Matt Anderson	Muirkirk Athletic
Vice President..	Mr Tom Murphy	Auchinleck Talbot
Secretary.....	Mr Felix McAtee	Auchinleck Talbot
Treasurer.....	Mr James McMillan	Cumnock Juniors

After the elections with Mr Anderson in the chair, the laws and the rules were set out (1) All clubs wishing to join the league would need to pay £3 entry fee (2) All home clubs would keep the gate money (3) All visiting clubs would be guaranteed £3 expenses (4) the league would run on the same rules governing all AJFA affiliated leagues. After all the formal proceedings the meeting adjourned leaving Mr McAtee to fix up the opening fixtures.

The new league opened in a blaze of glory with the clubs eager to show their loyalty by going through the opening fixture lists, but interest soon waned and the clubs went back to their cup campaigns, and worse was to follow when Mr McAtee left the secretary's post after the first month, but thankfully Mr Tom McIlwain of Talbot took over. Talbot were the only club to show any real interest in the league turning out for all the games allocated, but it could have been the case that with two of their office bearers holding high positions in the league that they had little option. To drum up some interest amongst the SAL clubs the league committee fixed up a select match against the Kilmarnock & District League at Beechwood, the SAL X1 consisting of: McCall(Cumnock) Dorrans(Muirkirk) Morrison(Cumnock) Smith(Talbot) Grant(New Cumnock) Purdie(New Cumnock) Tait(Cumnock) Anderson(Talbot) Mitchell(Muirkirk) Allison(New Cumnock) and Wallace from Muirkirk. In a match described as a financial success the SAL select ran out 2-0 winners with Allison and Tait receiving the handshakes.

By the beginning of 1921 the league committee were having major problems due to unfinished games the result of games being played on working Saturday's during the winter months. It was common sense that games played with 3.30 or 4pm kick offs wouldn't finish before darkness set in, but the clubs persisted in playing them leaving the committee to stand judge and jury over claims for points. In the end the SAL committee passed legislation that no league games should be played between the 31st of October and the last day in February except for the holiday period at New Year.

The loss of interest in the new league was finally shown in it's true light when the April meeting of the SAL in the Royal Hotel was

only attended by the secretary Mr McIlwain and the Catrine Juniors representative, this was also coupled with the fact that none of the teams were making positive moves to finish off their league programme it looked like once again league football was due to fail in South Ayrshire.

At the end of season AGM in Talbot's clubhouse with Mr Anderson on the chair, those present were told by Mr McIlwain the secretary that amazingly the league had made a profit of £12 10s 5d, and was financially sound. Talbot were unanimously elected league champions on the grounds that they had played more games than anybody else, and had amassed more points. Talbot were the first champions of the SAL, but it wasn't until October that they received the league flag.

THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1920-21

	Pld	Won	Lst	Drn	For	Ag	Pts
Auchinleck Talbot	9	6	2	1	17	9	13
New Cumnock United	5	3	1	1	7	4	7
Catrine Juniors	2	1	1	0	3	3	2
Muirkirk Athletic	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Kello Rovers	4	0	3	1	3	6	1
Cumnock Juniors	3	0	3	0	4	7	0

The meeting in the Talbot clubhouse continued with the election of the office bearers for the forth-coming 1921-22 season, and this saw a major reshuffle.

President	Mr Tom Murphy	(Talbot)
Vice President	Mr Andrew Pollok	(New Cumnock)
Secretary	Mr R Blair*	(No club )
Treasurer	Mr J McMillan	(Cumnock )

\* (Mr Robert Blair was also secretary of the Cumnock & Mauchline FA)

After the elections were passed, the new committee wavered the rules so that the entry fee to the league be raised to £5, the visitors guarantee raised to £5, and a new clause that non-fulfillment of fixtures could lead to a £10 fine--£7 to the aggrieved club--£3 to the league. A representative from Croneberry attended the AGM and asked that his club be entered for the league under the proviso that they only pay last season's entry fee of £3. After a lengthy discussion they were voted out. The meeting closed with the statement that any club wishing to join the SAL should contact Mr Tom McIlwain at Coal Road, Auchinleck.

#### THE 1921-22 SEASON

No new clubs joined at the outset of the new season, and this time the six founder members who were later joined by Glenbuck managed to play all but one of their league fixtures for the season. The SAL committee by November still had to issue a warning that league games must not be played in the winter months after a few protests filtered through after darkness stopping matches, and if the clubs persisted in doing this fines would be dished out.

On the football front Talbot became the pacesetters, ending in them not dropping a point at home, but it was their away form that involved them in an amazing title race at the end of the season. At official level the SAL held a special in Cumnock's new clubhouse which was the old smithy on Donaldson's Brae's to honour the retiring president

Mr Matt Anderson with his retiring presidents badge, and shortly after at another special meeting in the Royal Hotel on the 10th of December they discussed the request by Glenbuck to join the league. Glenbuck put forward the case that they were left in only two cup competitions, and had considered joining the SAL, but were only prepared to pay £4 entry fee. The committee pointed out that the Glenbuck representative should talk over the entry fee with his members, stating that £5 was the entry fee, and with a quarter of the league fixtures fulfilled already they better answer soon. Two days later Glenbuck joined the SAL.

By now the SAL was running fairly well, and in February 1922 they took on the might of the Ayr & District League in a select match at Connell Park, New Cumnock. In an entertaining match the SAL let slip a two goal lead to end up drawing 2-2, Harrison and Shankley (later of Portsmouth fame) grabbing the SAL's goals, while Goodwin of Ayr Fort and Rennie of Dailly Thistle got Ayr's counters. The SAL team on the day being : McDonald(New Cumnock) Cairns(Talbot) Dunbar(Talbot) Crate(New Cumnock) McCracken(Cumnock) Ward(Muirkirk) Thompson(Kello) Shankley(Glenbuck) Flynn(New Cumnock) Harrison(Cumnock) and Wallace of Muirkirk.

By April the title race had started to hot up. Talbot were still out in front and looking very good, while New Cumnock United who had only played four games up till then (winning one and drawing three) had too much interest in a host of cup competitions, so Talbot's chances of the title looked very safe indeed. New Cumnock plugged away regardless lifting the Ayrshire Consolation Cup by defeating Saltcoats at Rugby Park, they added the Mauchline & District Cup to their tally after a win over Muirkirk, and then the Ayr & District Cup was taken at the expense of Annbank Primrose. They also played in the final of the Cumnock & District Cup, but after a 1-1 draw with Talbot the replay was held over till next season. After this hectic campaign they started to claw their way up the league to threaten Talbot. Good home wins against Kello(5-0) Catrine(4-2) and Muirkirk(3-0) coupled with away wins over Muirkirk(2-1) Kello(1-0) and Glenbuck(5-1) a run only marred by a 2-0 defeat at Beechwood by Talbot saw the "U's" rise up the table. With New Cumnock sitting on 17 points by the end of May, and Talbot on 18 points, Talbot then saw their league campaign fall apart. With only three games remaining they lost 2-1 to Cumnock at New Station Park in a replayed match (The two teams had drawn 2-2 earlier in the season, but a complaint against the referee by Cumnock was backed up by the committee of the SAL and the game ordered to be replayed) Talbot then went to Glenbuck to play a much improved young Cherry's side who had thrashed Catrine 8-0 the week previous, and in a tousey match Glenbuck won 4-0. This left the last game of the season as the league decider with Talbot going to Connell Park. Talbot only needed a draw for the title, and in front of a good crowd it was the New Cumnock side who won 2-0 so winning the league championship.

At the May meeting of the SAL in the Royal Hotel, Muirkirk and Kello were summoned forth to give accounts about a league game causing much concern. Kello had landed at Muirkirk with only 7 players and with Muirkirk's permission listed the help of four Muirkirk locals, who helped the Rovers win 4-3. After the match Muirkirk protested on the grounds that one of the locals was a player from a Lanarkshire club. At the meeting Kello put forward the case that they didn't know any of the four men enlisted, and put down on the teamsheets

the names given to them. They also pointed out that if Muirkirk knew that the player was on the books with a Lanarkshire club why wasn't it brought up before the kick off? The game was ordered to be replayed at a later date, Muirkirk won 3-1.

The season ended with the AGM in the Royal Hotel in July 1922 with Mr Murphy in the chair. The only main topics were the fact that the SAL had cleared £10 profit for the season, and that the entry fee drop from £5 to £4 and the guarantee from £5 to £3. Catrine Juniors asked to be releived of their league status, and squared up their due's, no more league football was to be played at Catrine's St Cuthberts Park. This only left the election of office bearers to be voted on, and for the 1922-23 season the following men took office:

President	Mr James Gibson	Glenbuck Cherry's
Vice President**	Mr James McMillan	Cumnock Juniors
Secretary	Mr Robert Blair	No club
Treasurer	Mr Tom McIlwain	Auchinleck Talbot

\*\* (Note Mr McMillan gave up his post on the 22nd of July due to ill health and was replaced by Mr Tom McCaughtrie from Cumnock)

#### THE 1921-22 SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
New Cumnock United	12	8	1	3	27	8	19
Auchinleck Talbot	12	9	3	0	24	15	18
Cumnock Juniors	12	7	3	2	19	12	16
Glenbuck Cherrypickers	12	6	5	1	32	14	13
Muirkirk Athletic	12	3	8	1	14	19	7
Kello Rovers	11	2	9	0	11	31	4
Catrine Juniors	11	2	9	0	12	36	4

#### THE 1922-23 SEASON

After the fine way the league was run the season previous, the SAL committee hoped for some more of the same, but the lure of silverware was too much for some clubs, and at the start of the season the league became a sideshow. To highlight this Talbot opened their league account with a 4-0 victory over Cumnock at New Station Park, and then played their second match some six months later. To try and drum up some interest in the league the committee arranged a trial match at Beechwood for forthcoming select games (the SAL didn't play a select game in the whole season) The teams were to be named the A's and B's the A's made up from players from Talbot, Glenbuck, Muirkirk, and the newcomers Croneberry. The B's consisted of players from Cumnock New Cumnock, and Kello.

THE A's		THE B's	
Millin	Croneberry	McCall	Cumnock
Dunsmuir	Talbot	Ferguson	New Cumnock
Campbell	Glenbuck	Baird	Kello
McHallum	Croneberry	New	Cumnock
Brown	Muirkirk	McCracken	New Cumnock
Eadie	Muirkirk	Higgins	Cumnock
Scott	Glenbuck	Rorrison	Kello
Duke	Muirkirk	McDonald	New Cumnock
Thompson	Croneberry	Walker	New Cumnock
Weir	Talbot	McCulley	Cumnock
Menzies	Glenbuck	Ramsey	New Cumnock

CALL OFF'S...A's Smith and Ward(Talbot) Nisbett(Glenbuck) and Gebbie from Muirkirk. B's McGuire(Kello) and Keegans of New Cumnock. The B's won the match 2-0 thanks to two second half goals from the New Cumnock players, McDonald and Ramsey.

At the SAL's April meeting in the Royal Hotel it was found out that the match had made a loss of seven shillings, but Talbot were prepared to drop the fee for the use of Beechwood to offset costs. At the same meeting it was agreed that due to a large number of games being called off when the match referee failed to put in an appearance if the two clubs involved could agree to a neutral official standing in then they could feel free to do so. On the football side of affairs New Cumnock were not leaving their title challenge to the last kick this time, they shot to the top of the pile and stayed there, they also inflicted Talbot's first home SAL league defeat since 1920 when the league started. In a heated meeting in March at the Royal Hotel Muirkirk were hauled over the coals after their fans attacked the referee at the station, due to a defeat by close rivals Glenbuck, the SAL committee pointed out that it was an act of cowardice that a mob should take revenge on a single man. At the same meeting the committee stressed that all league fixtures should be played under the secretaries knowledge. Too many clubs were arranging matches on their own accord, and it had to stop. The problem came to a head last season when Catrine on discovering they had no game telegraphed Cumnock to come to Catrine for a league game. Cumnock who had a league backlog to clear up, found themselves with a cup match arranged for the same day, and didn't bother to contact the Catrine secretary, and this lead to Catrine putting in a claim for expenses for a game the SAL knew nothing off.

New Cumnock took their second league title by the beginning of June 1923, but at the June meeting in the Royal Hotel the same club was hammered by the SAL committee after the display by some of their team at Croneberry. With the league already won and New Cumnock drawn to play Skares Juniors in a cup competition they sent a second eleven to Croneberry to fulfill their league fixture with the Eglington. After a 2-0 defeat which was New Cumnock's only loss in twelve league games New Cumnock's George McLatchie grabbed the referee by the neck while the trainer punched him (in the referee's report the trainer was named as Blair). New Cumnock took the blame for McLatchie, but said that trainer Blair was at Skares with the first team. McLatchie was given 3 months while New Cumnock were given till the 7th of July to come up with the other man's name. Also at the same meeting Cumnock had lodged a complaint over the depleted side Muirkirk sent down for the last game of the season. The paying public were duped of their hard earned money when the Muirkirk team sat around smoking on the pitch while the game was in progress. This enabled Cumnock to run up a 12-0 scoreline, and they had received many complaints from the fans present. The SAL passed a ruling that in future cases all clubs must play a certain number of registered players in all games.

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At the AGM in the Royal Hotel, New Cumnock were dealt with after they produced the name of the man responsible for punching the referee at Croneberry, he was suspended for a year. It was then stated that the Western League were still refusing Southern entries to their league, but this was to be expected. The secretary Mr Blair told those in attendance that the SAL had made a profit of £4 19s 7d, and in 84



league ties only five field offences had been reported. After this the office bearers were then elected.

President	Mr T McCaughtrie	Cumnock Juniors
Vice President	Mr R Irvine	Kello Rovers
Secretary	Mr R Blair	No club
Treasurer	Mr J Gibson	Glenbuck Cherrypickers

#### THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1922-23

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
New Cumnock United	12	9	1	2	21	9	20
Auchinleck Talbot	12	5	2	5	21	8	15
Cumnock Juniors	12	6	6	0	30	20	12
Muirkirk Athletic	12	5	5	2	22	29	12
Kello Rovers	12	4	6	2	20	23	10
Glenbuck Cherrypickers	12	4	6	2	19	23	10
Croneberry Eglington	12	2	9	1	8	28	5

With new president Mr McCaughtrie on the chair the committee passed rulings that the entry fee be dropped from £4 to £3, and a special competition would be set up for next season so that the top four clubs in the league would be able to play for a cup and badges so to keep the interest going right up till the end of the season. After the rulings the committee were pleased to announce that Skares had joined the league after turning down the chance to play in the Ayr and District league. Mr McCaughtrie closed the meeting by pointing out that Cumnock would be playing in blue and white stripes next season, and all secretaries take note of the following club secretaries, and their addresses.

Auchinleck Talbot	Mr David Dunbar	Smithfield Place, Auch/ek
Cumnock Juniors	Mr Andrew McCall	Glaisnock St, Cumnock
New Cumnock United	Mr Charles Walker	Castlehill, New Cumnock
Muirkirk Athletic	Mr James Gibson	Ronaldo Place, Muirkirk
Croneberry Eglington	Mr Robert Biggans	Store Row, Croneberry
Kello Rovers	Mr Robert Hughes	9 St Conals Sq. Kirkconnel
Glenbuck Cherry's	Mr Alexander Davidson	Blyths Buildings, Glenbuck
Skares Juniors	Mr John Irvine	119 Skares

#### THE 1923-24 SEASON

The start of the new season passed pretty quietly with most of the clubs involved in cup football. The new boys from Skares found the going pretty tough, while league champions New Cumnock celebrated the unfurling of their second league flag by whacking Kello 5-2 in their opening fixture. I suppose it was the proverbial calm before the storm, because by the turn of the year things started to go wrong. At the February meeting in the Royal Hotel those present were informed that the SAL president Mr McCaughtrie and the secretary Mr Blair were invited to the AJFA's semi-jubilee dinner in Kilmarnock. At the same meeting it was proposed that the secretary get the fixtures wound up earlier than usual so the teams could take part in the new league shield competition.

A month later at the SAL meeting the committee were faced by irate New Cumnock members who were claiming that Croneberry be fined the set £10 for not turning up for their league match at Connell Park. The Croneberry secretary Mr Biggans pleaded with the SAL that he just could not put a team together because of the overtime shifts

being handed out at the pits, to try and coax men to give up extra money so as to play football was a futile exercise. Mr Biggans then stated that if the SAL fine Croneberry £10 it would spell the end of the club. After much discussion the SAL moved that the game be replayed at a later date, and Croneberry be fined 5 shillings so not to burden the club with any more financial problems.

A month later at the March meeting in the Royal Hotel Mr Biggans once more appeared before the committee this time to ask that Croneberry be given permission to retire from the league as double and treble shifts at the pits were making it impossible to put a team together. This fell on deaf ears, and Croneberry were instructed to finish their remaining five fixtures. That Saturday Croneberry entertained Muirkirk Athletic and lost 9-1 in front of a handfull of people, some of the Croneberry committee members had to strip down for action, and that included Mr Biggans. At the same meeting Skares were claiming the points and were prepared to keep Glenbuck's £3 guarantee over a match that lasted 70 minutes. The SAL by reading the referee's reports found out that both captains had agreed to play two 35 minute portions so the Glenbuck players could catch their train. Skares claims were quashed and they were ordered to pay Glenbuck their £3.

On the football front New Cumnock were slowly annexing points moving slowly to the top of the league. In a purple patch where the "U's" won the Ayr & District Cup and Dalmellington Charity Shield, a 6-0 drubbing of Talbot at Beechwood saw them go top, and stay there. They took their third league title by three points from Cumnock, and were joined by Muirkirk, Talbot, and Cumnock in the draw for the first ever SAL League Shield.

#### THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1923-24

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
New Cumnock United	14	9	2	3	41	17	21
Cumnock Juniors	14	8	4	2	33	20	18
Muirkirk Athletic	14	7	5	2	36	23	16
Auchinleck Talbot	14	7	5	2	31	25	16
Glenbuck Cherrypickers	14	7	6	1	32	20	15
Kello Rovers	13	5	5	3	23	27	13
Croneberry Eglington	13	2	9	2	15	47	6
Skares Juniors	14	2	11	1	13	44	5

At the AGM held in the Royal Hotel the draw for the Shield competition pitted Talbot against Cumnock, and Muirkirk against New Cumnock.

The SAL committee stated that due to the early close to the season the shield competition be held over till next season. They also told the representatives that Hurlford Thistle had now joined the league, and would be taking part in next season's competition. After this the office bearers were elected.

President	Mr J Irving	Kello Rovers
Vice President	Mr J Mullen	Croneberry Eglington
Secretary	Mr R Blair	No club
Treasurer	Mr J Gibson	Glenbuck Cherrypickers

#### THE 1924-25 SEASON

This season started with the semi-finals of the new League Shield competition. Talbot won the big derby match against Cumnock thanks to goals by Toal and McCosh, while McCall got Cumnock's only counter. In the other semi it was goals galore as Muirkirk and New Cumnock served up an 8 goal thriller. Muirkirk were up 5-0 at one time with Easton grabbing a treble while Gebbie and Duke made up the total. To New Cumnock's credit they hit back with three goals, White(2) and McLaughlan, but it was too late in coming so Muirkirk and Talbot contested the first Shield final. At New Station Park the teams shared a 1-1 draw, Gebbie for Muirkirk and Wyllie for Talbot. In the replay Muirkirk took the Shield by winning 2-0, Gebbie and Duke the scorers. Shortly after Gebbie signed on the dotted line for St Mirren

Muirkirk Athletic turned out to be the top team in the district, and by the end of the season they had taken the League flag as well as the Mauchline & District Cup. The league itself ran like clockwork untill the end of the season when the SJFA were brought in to smooth matters. The usual lull in league football during the winter months saw Muirkirk sitting on top of the league, and when the push for the title started in earnest Cumnock and Kello made a gallant bid to knock Muirkirk from top spot. The two challengers didn't help their cause any by taking points from each other, and Cumnock were rocked by a 4-0 defeat when old rivals Talbot started pushing for a place in the last four. Cumnock and Kello soon had to curtail their league runs when they reached the finals of three cups. Cumnock took the Ayr & District Cup and Coylton Cup, while Kello won the Cumnock & District Cup. After this distraction the league warmed up for the big finale and Muirkirk took the points off the Kello team at Furnace Park. Then Cumnock stopped any Muirkirk celebrations by winning 3-2 at New Station Park in a game that saw 2 Muirkirk players being sent off, and the police having to clear the field at one time. Muirkirk finally took the title by defeating Croneberry 4-0 at Furnace Park. After the taking of the league flag the league itself ground to a halt which left the SAL committee with the biggest headache so far

#### THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1924-25

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Muirkirk Athletic	14	11	2	1	28	14	23
Kello Rovers	12	9	3	0	27	12	18
Cumnock Juniors	13	8	3	2	26	15	18
Auchinleck Talbot	14	5	4	5	26	19	15
New Cumnock United	13	6	5	2	17	21	14
Glenbuck Cherrypickers	12	3	7	2	15	19	8
Croneberry Eglington	10	2	6	2	8	25	6
Hurlford Thistle	14	0	14	0	8	31	0***

\*\*\* (This is how the league was entered in the Cumnock Chronicle with Hurlford being credited with playing 14 games when in fact they only played 9. When they opted out of the league all the clubs still to meet them were given the two points)

At the June meeting in the Royal Hotel Mr Pollok of New Cumnock Utd claimed the two points from the unplayed match against Croneberry as this would take them above Talbot and into the League Shield semi-final draw. After a lengthy debate the SAL committee declared that the unfinished game should go ahead at the beginning of next season

so that the fourth team for the League Shield semi-finals could be decided.

At the AGM held in the Royal Hotel, Mr Blair stated that the SAL had cut a £15 deficit from last year to a £4 6s 0d profit. He also told those present that three SAL members had contested for seats in the AJFA committee, but were all defeated by a vote, the seats going to Western League officials, and he was far from pleased that the SAL had no clout in the county association. After this the elections took place for the 1925-26 office bearers:

President	Mr J Mullen	Croneberry Eglington
Vice President	Mr M Anderson	Muirkirk Athletic
Treasurer	Mr J Gibson	Glenbuck Cherrypickers
Secretary	Mr R Blair	No club

After welcoming the new office bearers, those present were told that league entry was now cut from £3 to £2.

#### THE 1925-1926 SEASON

At the SAL's first meeting at the Royal Hotel in August it was reported that Mossblown Rangers were admitted to the league, and that due to no moves being made either by Croneberry or New Cumnock to play last season's decider, Talbot are now named as the fourth team for the Shield competition. The New Cumnock representative appealed against the decision, and challenged Talbot to a match to decide the outcome. Talbot declined, which in my view was madness because in reality they didn't have a leg to stand on, and they had already beaten New Cumnock in the league at Connell Park. Mr Pollock of the "U's" told all present that the SJFA would be contacted to resolve the case. A couple of weeks later Mr Pollock and Mr Blair attended the SJFA Appeals Committee Meeting to clear up the protest. On the chair was Mr Harley, and he listened to the claims made by Mr Pollock and then Mr Blair of the SAL. Mr Harley passed the buck to Mr Blair by stating that New Cumnock should have the chance of playing the match against Croneberry.

At the September meeting of the SAL committee Mr Blair reported the decision of the SJFA, and the game was set for the 7th of November. With this out the way the committee then dealt with the riot at the Talbot v Cumnock league match at Beechwood. The referee reported that Talbot's Ramsey had struck Cumnock's McKerrow, only for the Cumnock man to retaliate. With the two players squaring up to each other Talbot's Johnstone took a hand in the matter by also striking McKerrow. This prompted a section of Talbot supporters to also join in as they were a bit peeved at being 2-0 down, resulting in a lot of calculated blows being rained down on to the body of the unfortunate McKerrow. The SAL had no option but to ban poor old McKerrow for two weeks, while Ramsey and Johnstone recieved one and two month bans respectively. Beechwood was also shut for a fortnight.

With all the goings on off the park, Cumnock's rise to the top of the table had passed unnoticed, and due to some excellent league football they were keeping last years champions, Muirkirk at bay, while the rest of the league clubs were falling so far behind it was becoming a two horse race by the turn of the year.

At the December meeting New Cumnock were once again present stating

that Croneberry refused to play the game on the 7th of November as there was no reward in it for them, and they were not prepared to put up with extra expense so to decide the outcome of a game that was supposed to be played last season. The SAL couldn't agree on an outcome so the SJFA were telegraphed to decide the matter. A week later a communication from the SJFA demanded that Croneberry be disqualified, and New Cumnock be awarded the tie (seemingly the SJFA must have thought this was a cup game) The following week New Cumnock and Cumnock played the long awaited semi-final tie for a chance to meet Kello in the final. The teams fought out a 1-1 draw, before New Cumnock won 5-4, only to lose in the final to Kello.

With this major problem finally laid to rest the teams settled down for the league run-in. It was Cumnock and Muirkirk that broke away from the pack, but Cumnock suffered a major knockback when Kello won 3-1 at Kirkconnel. Cumnock fought back and recorded a fine 1-1 draw at Muirkirk's Furnace Park, and then took two points of Athletic by winning 3-2 at New Station Park, putting them back on top of the pile.

At the March meeting of the SAL, held at the Royal Hotel, Mr Gibson of Glenbuck asked for the Cherry's to be relieved of their remaining 7 fixtures, as crowds were dwindling to around 30 people, and the club was having difficulties paying the guarantee's to visiting clubs he also stated that every game was dragging the club further into the red. Although the SAL agreed that they didn't want to put any more financial pressure on Glenbuck, the fact was their remaining 7 matches could have a big say on where the championship was heading, and with a game against Muirkirk, and two against Cumnock the SAL couldn't postpone the Glenbuck fixtures. To compromise the SAL had Glenbuck play these three important ties with the two clubs that were in the championship race, as these were the last games that Muirkirk and Cumnock had to play. Cumnock made the journey to the Glenbuck village and recorded a 3-2 win putting them on level points with Athletic. Muirkirk then journeyed up to Glenbuck to play their mortal enemies (this tie overshadowed Cumnock and Talbot matches) and were crushed 6-3. Cumnock took the championship at New Station Park when they crushed Glenbuck 7-0 so to win their first championship. After this match the league was wound up with many matches still to play.

#### THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1925-26

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Cumnock Juniors	14	11	1	2	48	16	24
Muirkirk Athletic	14	10	2	2	50	29	22
New Cumnock United	12	5	4	3	37	26	13
Auchinleck Talbot	11	4	4	3	23	26	11
Croneberry Eglinton	14	4	8	2	26	38	10
Kello Rovers	9	1	4	4	17	23	6
Glenbuck Cherrypickers	10	2	8	0	18	36	4
Mossblown Rangers	10	2	8	0	23	48	4

At the AGM in the Royal Hotel, Mr Blair told those present that the SAL was showing a few pounds profit, and it could have been more if the coal strike had not played havoc with fixtures and money matters. Sadly Mr Gibson of Glenbuck told all present that the Cherry's had decided to call it a day due to the financial position of the club

but waiting in the wings were the officials of Lugar Boswell Thistle who had just stepped up from the Juvenile ranks. The SAL agreed to the entry of Lugar, and their representatives Mr McSorland and Davidson were invited to take a place in the meeting. The election then took place with the office bearers being:

President	Mr Matt Anderson	Muirkirk Athletic
Vice President	Mr Lindsay	Auchinleck Talbot
Treasurer	Mr Kenningly	Cumnock Juniors
Secretary	Mr Blair	No club

After the election those present at the meeting were told that teams from Galston, Burnfoothill, Girvan, and a works team from Kilmarnock known as Glenfield were all seeking election to the SAL. The SAL committee couldn't reach an agreement of the kind that would allow these teams to join because two of them belonged to the Ayr & District League. On the 14th of July the SAL admitted Glenfield, Galston and Springside Thistle, but the Ayr & District clubs still wanted to join the SAL. It all came to a head when Mr Blair the SAL secretary was summoned to Carlton Place in Glasgow to appear in front of the Permits Committee. The Ayr & District League had lodged a complaint saying the SAL were trying to poach their clubs, but Mr Blair put forward his points which impressed Mr Harley of the SJFA that he ruled the Ayr & District League was a spent force, and the SAL were to admit all the Ayr clubs leaving the SAL with 16 clubs.

With 16 clubs the SAL was in some turmoil, but the Permits Committee requested that the clubs be split into two sections. This was done on a geographical basis, with the two sections made up of eight clubs they were called the East Section, and West Section:

EAST	WEST
Cumnock Juniors	Girvan Juniors
New Cumnock United	Dailly Thistle
Muirkirk Athletic	Benwhat Heatherbell
Auchinleck Talbot	Burnfoothill Primrose
Croneberry Eglington	Mossblown Rangers
Lugar Boswell	Annbank Primrose
Kello Rovers	Glenfield Juniors
Galston Juniors	Springside Thistle

(The two section winners to compete for the league flag. Each section winner would be provided with badges)

The East Section was undoubtedly the toughest, but Lugar and Cumnock made a rousing start, while in the West Section it was a somewhat slower pace, but both sections kicked off regardless. The league soon suffered as cup football was at a premium, and worse was to come when many of the clubs as early as December were finding football a financial burden. The miners strike was still in full swing and many were working a three day week, and this included a Saturday. ~~Most clubs couldn't meet the expense of paying a miners Saturday shift due to a drop in gate receipts.~~

With the SAL meetings now moved to the Loudon Arms Hotel the SAL had to elect delegates to handle fixtures for both sections so to relieve the pressure on the league secretary. At the December meeting at the Loudon Arms in Mauchline the delegated clubs to handle the fixtures were allocated as thus: East. Kello, Galston, and New Cumnock, while

Mossblown, Annbank, and Glenfield looked after the west fixtures. At the same meeting a delegate motioned that due to the miners strike the league should throw in the towel. This suggestion was soundly beaten and the SAL remained solvent.

The rot started to show by February, and at the SAL meeting in the Loudon Arms the committee were asked by Glenfield to scratch from the league as they couldn't compete with the highly successful Kilmarnock. This cut no ice with the committee, and Glenfield were told to finish their remaining nine matches, but unknown to the committee Glenfield had already folded. By the 10th of March Mossblown Rangers and Springside followed suit leaving the West section with five clubs. On the 29th of April Muirkirk Athletic pleaded for their remaining fixtures to be scrapped, and their secretary Mr Anderson pointed out that the working Saturday was slowly eroding the financial cause of the club, and where they were playing to around 500 crowds, only a mere handful were attending making the guarantee to the visiting team very hard to come by. In fact Talbot, Croneberry and New Cumnock United were also in financial trouble, and after the 5-1 win by Lugar over New Cumnock which gave Lugar the league both sections were wound up with many games still to play, Burnfoothill being the West Champions. During the following season Burnfoothill and Lugar played the decider for the flag at Rosebank, and in an entertaining match Lugar became league champions by winning 3-0, the goals coming from Hissett and Kerr(2).

#### THE AYRSHIRE SOUTHERN LEAGUE 1926-27 EAST SECTION

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Lugar Boswell	13	9	3	1	38	14	19
Kello Rovers	13	6	5	2	32	22	14
Muirkirk Athletic	12	5	4	3	21	20	13
Cumnock Juniors	12	6	6	0	29	25	12
Auchinleck Talbot	10	4	5	1	17	17	9
Galston Juniors	11	3	5	3	19	34	9
New Cumnock United	8	2	4	2	12	21	6
Croneberry Eglington	5	0	3	2	4	16	2

#### THE AYRSHIRE SOUTHERN LEAGUE 1926-27 WEST SECTION

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Burnfoothill Primrose	8	5	1	2	18	13	12
Girvan Juniors	8	3	2	3	14	11	9
Annbank Primrose	7	4	3	0	14	21	8
Benwhat Heatherbell	7	3	3	1	15	17	7
Dailly Thistle	7	1	3	3	7	18	5
Glenfield Juniors***	5	1	4	0	9	15	2
Springside Thistle***	2	0	2	0	3	5	0
Mossblown Rangers***	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*\*\* (These clubs folded during the season)

Before the SAL AGM, the Cumnock Chronicle reported that the rift between the SJFA and a large number of clubs was widening throughout Scotland. (I won't go into the dispute in great detail as a fellow Junior historian, Stewart Davidson hopes to publish a booklet on the Intermediate Dispute in the near future) In a nutshell a lot of clubs especially in the Central Belt of Scotland were far from pleased with the rulings that let the senior clubs poach Junior players with the Junior clubs powerless to do anything about it. The Chronicle reporter of that time didn't hold the Intermediates in high esteem, and it must have been a shock to his system when on the 17th of June Cumnock and Galston crossed over to play in the Western Intermediate League. The reporter rightly pointed out that the Western League had snubbed the southern clubs since 1920, and he found it rather strange that both Cumnock and Galston were welcomed with open arms at this stage in history. The Cumnock secretary stated in an interview that Cumnock Juniors were not interested in the dispute itself, but had welcomed the chance to provide a better class of football to the patrons of Cumnock, and with the visits of Meadow, Kilbirnie, and suchlike, in a way it was a shrewd move

The AGM meeting at the Royal Hotel was told that Muirkirk Athletic had folded, and any club in Ayrshire that was still loyal to the SJFA was welcome to join. Talbot, Kello, New Cumnock United, Lugar Croneberry, Burnfoothill, and Dalmellington United were then allowed admittance. Before the elections took place a representative asked what had happened to the League Shield, but the committee pointed out that due the 1925-26 league being wound up unfinished, and the debacle of the New Cumnock, Talbot semi final squabble the season previous to that, it seemed a lost cause. As for last season with two divisions, the league shield competition couldn't be run fairly. The elections then took place:

President	Mr Lindsay	Auchinleck Talbot
Vice President	Mr James Montieth	Kello Rovers
Treasurer	Mr Bill Stevenson	New Cumnock United
Secretary	Mr Robert Blair	No Club

After the elections the representatives of Lugar and Burnfoothill complained about the quality of the badges they recieved for winning the two SAL sections. It was pointed out that the league was strapped for cash, and rather than go into the red, the committee decided that the badges were to be of inferior quality, remembering they had two sets of badges to pay for. Lugar excepted this explanation under a protest.

The 1927-28 season started with seven clubs, but by August the Ayr & District clubs Girvan and Annbank Primrose were re-admitted under a law passed by the SJFA that any club remaining loyal to the SJFA will be guaranteed league football. Why this was put forward by the SJFA in the case of Girvan and Annbank remains a mystery as both clubs had already played under the SAL banner. In September and still under the SJFA ruling, Rankinston Juniors and Irvine Railwaymen tried to join the league, but by this time the SAL put their foot down by telling the two clubs that the SAL fixtures were well under way.

The league was run without any major set-backs, although the working Saturday was still causing problems, and only mid-week and holidays were being used to full effect. Cumnock on the other hand were



enjoying top class football in front of big crowds, Cumnock's dream had come true, and indeed it was a shrewd move by the New Station Park club.

In the SAL the league championship race turned into a two horse race between Kello and Croneberry, and it was the Kirkconnel club that was to the fore during the early part of the league fixtures. In the jousts between the two clubs Kello took the points at Croneberry's Mortonmuir Park by winning 2-0, but the Eglington gained revenge by winning 3-2 at Kirkconnel. Last season's champions, Lugar had started late in their league campaign, and were in fact playing scratch sides in their league games, as they were on a tremendous run in the Scottish Cup as well as the county cup. Although the premier campaign was to finish in defeat before the semi-stage, the Lugar side did take the Ayrshire Cup, by defeating Dreghorn at Rugby Park by 2-1.

With the SAL meetings now being held at the YMCA Institute Rooms at Ayr, the March meeting dealt with a complaint against Croneberry and New Cumnock. In a league match against Croneberry, the New Cumnock officials approached the Croneberry committee to ask that the game be called to an early halt due to a large number of the New Cumnock side having to catch a bus home. With fully 20 minutes of the game still to play, Croneberry agreed, but with the proviso that they had to be winning, as this was the case the game was ended. Many at the meeting agreed that the match result was unfair to Kello who were in the championship race with Croneberry, and in fact the result played a big factor in the league itself. The committee gave the case a great deal of thought, and declared the result to be okay. Kello did accept the decision, but under protest.

By April the league was won by Croneberry after Lugar defeated Kello at Rosebank, while Croneberry thrashed Annbank Primrose 6-0 at their Mortonmuir Park. The league was wound up unfinished after Talbot sent down a scratch team to Girvan where they were hammered 8-0. The SAL stated after this match that too many clubs were near financial collapse, and it was needless and unfair to make teams play matches that were unimportant. The SAL's words had a true ring to them because after the league was wound up, both Talbot and New Cumnock folded under financial pressure, although one must say that the New Cumnock club had just fought a running battle with the SJFA over the fining of their player Keegans.

#### THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1927-28

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Croneberry Eglington	14	12	1	1	35	9	25
Kello Rovers	15	11	3	2	48	26	22
Burnfoothill Primrose	12	6	4	2	16	15	14
Lugar Boswell	12	6	5	1	28	28	13
Girvan Juniors	15	5	9	1	34	45	11
Dalmellington United	11	4	6	1	26	31	9
Auchinleck Talbot	13	2	6	5	16	31	9
New Cumnock United	10	2	6	2	13	23	6
Annbank Primrose	10	2	7	1	22	30	5

At the AGM in the Royal Hotel on the 7th of July 1928, those present were told by Mr Blair that from 144 league fixtures, last season's clubs had completed 109, and due to there being no free Saturdays :

last season the SAL had to be congratulated on the 109 games that were played. The elections were then taken:

President	Mr Montieth	Kello Rovers
Vice President	Mr Torrance	Croneberry Eglington
Secretary & Treasurer	Mr Blair	No Club

Those present were then told that the Ayr & District League had been recruiting clubs to their fold so that a comeback could be made, and it had been mooted in footballing circles that Burnfoothill, Girvan, Annbank, and Dalmellington were taking an interest in affairs. This left the SAL with Croneberry, Kello, and Lugar in their ranks. Mr Blair was instructed to contact the SJFA Permits Committee after the meeting.

In August Mr Blair attended the Permits Committee meeting at Carlton Place to complain about the Ayr & District League, but he was told to hold a meeting with the Ayr members, and the SJFA would send a representative. The meeting took place at the YMCA Institute Rooms in Ayr on the 18th of August with Mr J.A. Lang of the SJFA in attendance. It was clear from the start that the A&D clubs wanted to go on their own, but Mr Lang was an expert speaker, and soon had the word amalgamation being raised. All his points were solid and sensible, and by the end of the meeting he had managed to heal the split by telling all the clubs to go back home, and think about it. A week later they attended another meeting in Ayr with Mr Gillespie of Burnfoothill on the chair, and suggestions and ideas were laid down, until Mr Montieth suggested that the two leagues should come under the banner of the Ayrshire League, as it was the only league in the county still loyal to the SJFA in the Intermediate dispute. Mr Montieth also stated that the running of the league should come under the jurisdiction of the AJFA, but this was soundly defeated. At last the two leagues struck up a partnership under the name of the Ayrshire League and the Ayr & District office bearers were voted as the new league's top men. Croneberry, Kello, and Lugar who had been trying to gain entry to the Scottish Junior League all joined. One part that the amalgamation overlooked was the end of Mr Robert Blair's association with league football. Mr Blair was one of the districts great leaders, and it was only fitting that the Cumnock Chronicle and all the local clubs paid tribute to him on his death in July 1931.

With the new Ayrshire League dominated by the Ayr clubs, for the first time everything ran like clockwork. Lugar were to be the top club in the county, although to be fair there was only about 12 clubs still loyal to the SJFA by then. By the end of the season Lugar had won the Ayrshire, Cumnock & District, Coylton, and Ayr & District cups, while Croneberry took the Mauchline Cup, amazingly Lugar didn't take the league championship, but this was due to their cup success.

On New Years Day the Ayrshire League took a select down to play Stranraer, drawing 1-1 with White scoring the AL's goal, the team being: Murray, Stevenson, Bryce, Murray, McHattie, Duncan, Hessett, Whiteford, White, Scobie, and McClymont. It was reported as an enjoyable day for the AL members.

At the February meeting in Ayr the committee were informed that Annbank Primrose were seeking permission to leave the league as they had no support to mention, and were finding it difficult to carry on.

This was granted. Also at the same meeting the committee listened to a complaint by Dalmellington after Irvine LMS (London, Midland Scottish, This was a railworkers club) failed to make an appearance for the two club's league fixture. The secretary of the Irvine club told the league committee that the players were at Irvine station, but most of them were commandeered by the railway company for fog duty leaving LMS with no team. The case was dismissed.

On the 6th of April the AL Select was in action at Somerset Park when they took on Ayr United Reserves in a match for league funds, the team being; Murray(Croneberry) Livingston(Kello) Ballantyne(Burnfoothill) Plenderlieth(LMS) McHattie(Benwhat) Eadie(Kello) Kelly (Croneberry) Fowler(Croneberry) Scobie(Benwhat) Dougan(Kello) and Ferguson from Kello. The game was reported as a financial success with Kello's Ferguson and Fowler scoring for the AL.

By the end of the season the league championship stakes had all but come to a close with Kello, Croneberry, and Benwhat fighting it out. Kello were the early pacesetters, but Cronberry had already taken 3 points off the Kirkconnell outfit, but the Rovers had bounced back with a 3-2 win at Burnfoothill. Benwhat made a push for the title after hammering an understrength Lugar 9-2 at their Char Row ground, but after Croneberry and Benwhat lost at Lugar and Girvan respectively, Kello only needed one point from their last remaining two games to take the title. It was done on the first time of asking when they ran out easy winners at home, winning 4-0 against Girvan to become the first Ayrshire League champions.

#### THE AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1928-29

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Kello Rovers	14	11	1	2	54	19	24
Croneberry Eglinton	14	9	3	2	44	15	20
Benwhat Heatherbell	14	8	2	4	41	20	20
Lugar Boswell	14	7	6	1	38	31	15
Dalmellington United	14	5	6	3	27	35	13
Burnfoothill Primrose	14	4	7	3	23	35	11
Girvan Juniors	14	2	9	3	22	46	7
Irvine LMS	14	0	12	2	11	59	2

(Annbank played two games losing to Kello 4-1 and drawing with Lugar 1-1, the points won by Lugar and Kello were annexed by the league)

At the AGM held in the YMCA Institute Rooms in Ayr, the gathered throng were informed that the AL had cut a £21 10s 1d deficit which was a legacy of the defunct SAL to £2 13s 1d. The election of office bearers then took place:

President	Mr McCartney	Croneberry Eglinton
Vice President	Mr T Duff	Irvine LMS
Treasurer	Mr J Allan	Benwhat Heatherbell
Secretary	Mr A Steele	18 Glenburn Road, Prestwick.

#### THE 1929-30 SEASON

This season saw the return of Talbot to the fold, but New Cumnock were now amongst the Juveniles. In July the AL laid claim to Saltcoats Dreghorn, and the new Ardeer club by claiming under the SJFA ruling that as the only SJFA affiliated league in the county these three clubs should come under their wing. This was not to be the case as

the three clubs decided to stay in the Glasgow based Scottish Junior League. Cumnock had once again crossed the divide by being elected to the AL from the Intermediates, but the Nock had a hectic start to the season and had to play Juvenile combinations until the SJFA had given all their last season's pool association status.

The league ran fairly well with Kello and Benwhat becoming early pacesetters. In their first three games Kello hammered Croneberry 7-1, Lugar 5-1, and Annbank 7-2, while Benwhat had annexed four points from Talbot, while hammering Cumnock 5-2 at Char Row.

The winter months saw the clubs interested in cup football, and this gave Cumnock a chance to re-sign their Intermediate side from the season previous, and what a change it made with Cumnock winning the League title, and losing to Kello in the finals of the Mauchline & District Cup, and Consolation Cup.

The new year had taken it's toll on the league clubs, and by February Annbank Primrose and Irvine LMS had left the league. In April the AL played another select match against Ayr United's second string which ended in defeat and financial disaster. The team was: McCaffer(Dalmellington) Murray(Benwhat) Paton(Croneberry) Reid(Talbot) Baird(Talbot) McLeod(Kello) Wyllie(Dalmellington) Rorrison(Kello) McAvoy(Croneberry)Duncan(Talbot) Ferguson(Dalmellington) Travelling Reserve was McHattie(Benwhat) The AL Select lost 3-1, Ferguson scoring.

The run-in for the title turned out to be exciting and controversial with Kello, Cumnock, and Benwhat all in the hunt. Kello dropped out of the race when Cumnock won 3-0 at New Station Park leaving the Kello lad's with 18 points. Benwhat were right behind Kello with 17 points and a game in hand against Cumnock, while Cumnock themselves had 15 points with two games to play. The first was at Lugar which ended in a shambles with four men sent-off and a break-in with ten minutes of the game remaining the score being 2-1 in Cumnock's favour. With this hanging over them Cumnock defeated Benwhat 2-0 at New Station Park, and at the June meeting of the AL Cumnock were given the points and the league title after the committee found Lugar guilty of bringing the game into disrepute, having 3 men sent-off, and their fans encroaching the field of play. At the meeting Cumnock's was a happy outcome, but Lugar were fined 10 shillings and their ground shut for four months, all their openinggames were not to be played within a three mile radius of Lugar.

#### THE AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1929-30

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Cumnock Juniors	12	9	2	1	35	17	19
Kello Rovers	12	8	2	2	33	14	18
Benwhat Heatherbell	12	8	3	1	35	24	17
Lugar Boswell	12	3	5	4	26	27	10
Auchinleck Talbot	12	3	7	2	18	31	8
Dalmellington United	12	2	7	3	17	28	7
Croneberry Eglington	12	1	8	3	19	42	5

(Annbank Primrose played 1 game, losing 7-2 to Kello, while Irvine

LMS played 5, losing 2-0 to Lugar, 8-0 to Talbot, 11-1 to Kello, and 2-1 to Dalmellington. They drew 2-2 with Croneberry. All points were annexed by the league)

At the AGM at the YMCA Rooms in Ayr with Mr McCartney on the chair, the office beares were then elected:

President	Mr Murray Tanner	Auchinleck Talbot
Vice President	Mr William Black	Kello Rovers
Treasurer	Mr John Allan	Benwhat Heatherbell
Secretary	Mr Steele	No Club

#### SEASON 1930-31

This season saw the comeback of Glenbuck Cherrypickers, and the emergence of the new club Glenafton Athletic who were to go on and emulate the success of the now defunct Glenafton Athletic.

In the opening league jousts it was Glenbuck and Glenafton that made the early progress, and it was at the end of the year that they broke away from the pack. The AL itself was running fairly well and on Christmas Day they took a select down to play Stranraer, the team being: Wilson(Glenafton) Livingston(Kello) Barbour(Cumnock) Eccles (Dalmellington) Rorrison(Kello) Eadie(Kello) McIlwraith, Corbett, and McCall(All Cumnock) Carruthers(Benwhat) and Sim from Glenafton. In a superb match where Stranraer were describe as nothing more than a good Junior side, the AL came away with a 5-3 victory, the AL's goals all coming from the Cumnock lad's (McIlwraith 2, Corbett 2, and McCall)

At the AL January meeting in Ayr the committee were pleased to announce that the district's pits were now all using the idle Saturday arrangement so making league football all the more easy to play. It was also announced that the league was to lose Benwhat who were now finding it impossible to carry on due to financial problems.

In the league title race the Glenafton team were soon stamping their superiority amongst the other clubs, and by the end of the season they took the league as well as the Coynton Cup, and Irvine District Cup. In 14 games they scored 54 goals, sixteen of them against poor old Croneberry. They also took four points off Cumnock and hammered Talbot 5-0 at Connell Park, their only defeat came at Beechwood where they lost 4-1. Glenbuck had made a valiant push for the title but a 3-1 defeat at Connell Park, coupled with draws against Cumnock, Croneberry, and Glenafton ended the Cherry's chances. The league was wound up when Glenafton took the title.

#### THE AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1930-31

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Glenafton Athletic	14	11	1	2	54	16	24
Glenbuck Cherrypickers	13	9	1	3	36	17	21
Auchinleck Talbot	13	6	4	3	34	26	15
Croneberry Eglington	13	4	5	4	17	28	12
Cumnock Juniors	12	3	5	4	18	16	10
Kello Rovers	11	2	6	3	11	32	7
Dalmellington United	12	3	9	0	14	22	6
Lugar Boswell	12	1	8	3	15	33	5

(Benwhat played five matches winning two, losing two, and drawing one this included a 3-3 draw with Glenafton, all points were annexed by the league committee.)

At the AGM held in Ayr the committee found out that all the Ayr clubs had now folded, and the secretary Mr Steele stood down because of this. The elections then took place:

President	Mr Lamont	Cumnock Juniors
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Vice President	Mr McCann	Glenafton Athletic
Treasurer	Mr Steele	Auchinleck Talbot
Secretary	Mr Tanner	Auchinleck Talbot

After the elections it was voted that the league now be called the South Ayrshire League, and all matters should be put before the committee who would now be holding meetings in the Cumnock district.

#### THE 1931-32 SEASON

So it was the power had swung back to the South Ayrshire League, and unknown to the clubs they were to embark on their last league campaign in the south of Ayrshire. The Western League dominated the county football, and with only six clubs left the SAL was now on it's last legs.

After a spirited return Glenbuck once again folded, so with only six clubs, the SAL kicked off with a full fixture list. Cumnock and the Glen's set the early pace, but Cumnock slipped back when Talbot won 5-1 at New Station Park. The Glen's on the other hand hammered Kello 7-0, Cumnock 6-0 and Talbot 5-0 all at Connell Park, coupled with a 5-1 away win at Croneberry. The championship was decided as early as February when a 3-2 victory for the Glen's at Beechwood saw them take the title.

#### THE SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1931-32

	PLD	WON	LST	DRN	FOR	AGT	PTS
Glenafton Athletic	10	7	0	3	35	6	17
Cumnock Juniors	10	5	2	3	18	16	13
Auchinleck Talbot	9	3	4	2	18	18	8
Croneberry Eglinton	7	3	4	0	10	19	6
Kello Rovers	6	1	2	3	6	18	5
Lugar Boswell	8	1	6	1	7	15	3

With the league finishing so early the committee brought back the old League Shield to play in a cup basis. The draw saw Lugar v Cumnock, and Kello v Croneberry, while Talbot and Glenafton recieved a bye. The Lugar v Cumnock tie took four games to decide the winner, with Lugar winning 1-0 at the fourth attempt. Croneberry made short work of Kello, and defeated Glenafton in the semi 3-1, their goalie scored twice from the spot. In the other semi Talbot and Lugar drew 2-2, but due to the SJFA bringing the season to a halt the shield was to be held over till next season. The competition was never finished as Cumnock, Talbot, Glenafton, Kello, and Lugar tried to enter the Western League. The SAL went to the wall, so did Croneberry, the five clubs were refused entry to the Western League, along with Ayr Juniors. The clubs protested to the SJFA but were fobbed off to the AJFA which was run by the Western League, they were again refused entry. Talbot tried to go it alone with the WL, but for the third time were refused. During the Intermediate Dispute, the SJFA passed ruling that the SAL should make room for anybody loyal to the SJFA cause. The SAL did this for a number of years, and was the only league in the county still loyal to the governing body. It was shoddy treatment by the SJFA to snub teams that were so loyal, and stood by their beloved cause of taking sides with the SJFA in a dispute set to split the Junior game. The treatment of the South Ayrshire sides in 1932 by the SJFA, AJFA, and the Western League, is a black mark on the history of league football in Ayrshire that the south has not forgotten.

SOUTH AYRSHIRE LEAGUE 1920 - 32 Club Index

ANNBANK PRIMROSE

Joined the Southern League in 1926, and then left in 1930. A prominent Ayr & District club, but made no impact at county level. Little is known of them except they played at Pebble Park, probably a fore-runner to Annbank United's New Pebble Park.

AUCHINLECK TALBOT

A founder member of the SAL, and first championship winners. As a member of the SAL they reached the Scottish Cup semi-final in 1924, won the Ayrshire Consolation Cup in 1931, and the Irvine Herald Cup in 1930 and 1931. The only southern club to win the Herald Cup.

BENWHAT HEATHERBELL

Joined the SAL in 1926 when the Ayr & District League folded. Benwhat or Benquhat as it was otherwise known was situated on the hills between Dalmellington and Patna. It was a mining settlement belonging to the Dalmellington Iron Company. The Heatherbell's Char Row ground was built well over 1000ft above sea level probably the highest ever Junior ground. The "Ben's" played in light blue and were a fine Junior team. They won no Ayrshire honours as an SAL member but won the Ayrshire Cup in 1900. They folded in 1931

BURNFOOTHILL PRIMROSE

Joined the SAL in 1926 and folded in 1929. They won the SAL West Section in 1927, but won no major honours in Ayrshire as an SAL member. They did however win the Ayrshire Consolation Cup in 1919. Burnfoothill was a mining settlement belonging to the Dalmellington Iron Company, and sat on a hill overlooking Patna. The settlement was split into two parts, Burnfoothill and Lethanhill, but little is known or been recorded about the football club.

CATRINE JUNIORS

A founder member of the SAL, and a prominent club just after the Great War. Catrine was a thriving Mill town at this period of history, but the club found Junior football a chore, and slipped into the Juvenile ranks where they enjoyed limited success. No record of club colours, but Catrine played at St Cuthberts Park. Folded as a Junior club in 1922.

CRONEBERRY EGLINGTON

Joined the SAL in 1922, and were probably one of the early greats in Ayrshire Junior football. Croneberry is a small settlement comprising of around six houses, but in it's heyday it was a bustling mine-workers community belonging to the Baird Mining Company. The Eglington played in black and white, their ground was Mortonmuir Park. They were the Junior club that Liverpool's Bill Shankly played for. As an SAL member Croneberry won the Ayrshire Cup in 1930. They folded in 1932.

CUMNOCK JUNIORS

A founder member of the SAL, but Joined the Intermediates for two seasons. Played in a host of colours until adopting the famous black

and white, their home was New Station Park which is now a part of Cumnock's cemetery. They won no major honours as a SAL member, but took home a host of district trophies in their time as an SAL club.

#### DAILLY THISTLE

Joined the SAL in 1926 and lasted one season. A member of the Ayr & District League, they came from Old Dailly which can be found between Maybole and Girvan on the B741. Little is known or been recorded about this club.

#### DALMELLINGTON UNITED

Joined the SAL in 1927, and folded in 1931. They won no Ayrshire honours, but were stripped of the Ayrshire Cup in 1930 when they played an unregistered player against Croneberry in the final. Like most Ayr & District clubs little is known about them.

#### GALSTON JUNIORS

Joined the SAL in 1926, but went over to the Intermediates, and then stayed as a Western League club. Played in red and black, and reached no great heights as a Junior club.

#### GLENAFTON ATHLETIC

Were formed and joined the SAL in 1930 where they went on to win the last two league titles. Played in green, and then red and white, they moved into New Cumnock United's Connell Park ground. As an SAL member they won the Irvine & District Cup in 1931.

#### GLENBUCK CHERRYPICKERS

Joined the SAL in 1921, but never won the title. Played at Burnside Park in all white strips. They won the Ayrshire Cup for the first three years of it's founding, and won it for a fourth time in 1931 as a SAL member. What's left of Glenbuck can be found a few miles from Muirkirk. It was known as the "Nursery of Football" due to the great players from the village that become seniors, including the Shankly brothers.

#### GLENFIELD JUNIORS

A works team from Kilmarnock who joined the SAL in 1926, but lasted one season as they couldn't compete with the successful Kilmarnock club of that time. Little is known or has been recorded about this club.

#### GIRVAN JUNIORS

Joined the SAL in 1926, and folded in 1929. No records about this club.

#### HURLFORD THISTLE

Joined the SAL in 1924 when things were on the slide, and the club was facing financial ruin. They didn't last the season out. Played at Blair Park, and won the Ayrshire Cup in 1886, and the Consolation Cup in 1917.

#### IRVINE LMS

Joined the SAL in 1928, but only lasted a few seasons. They were a works side belonging to the London, Scottish, Midland, Rail Company.



#### KELLO ROVERS

A founder member of the SAL and one time title holder, they were one of the most successful of the SAL clubs. They took part in every season of the SAL, the only club to do this. Going by records they played at Common Park which was seemingly opened with a friendly against Cumnock in 1920. As a SAL member they won the Consolation Cup in 1930.

#### MOSSBLOWN RANGERS

A short lived club who joined the SAL in 1925 and lasted two seasons. One of a host of Junior clubs from Mossblown ie. Drumley and Mossblown Strollers. The Rangers moved down to the Juveniles.

#### MUIRKIRK ATHLETIC

A founder member of the SAL, their real name was Muirkirk Ex-Services Athletic. Played in gold and black, their ground was Furnace Park. Made no great impression as an SAL club, but won the Ayrshire Cup in 1915. A highly successful club at district level.

#### NEW CUMNOCK UNITED

Founded as the same year as the SAL, in their opening five years they were the most powerful club in South Ayrshire, dominating the district trophies, and league, as well as capturing the Consolation Cup in 1922. They played at Connell Park which was opposite Knockshinnagh Pit, it is now a farmers field.

#### SKARES JUNIORS

Joined the SAL in 1923 for one season, but found Junior football too tough. Slipped into the Juvenile ranks and found greater success. Skares was a mining settlement just on the Cumnock outskirts, some of the houses are still there today.

#### SPRINGSIDE THISTLE

Joined the SAL in 1926 for one season, and had played in a host of other leagues. A very famous team due to a Scottish Cup match which saw the AJFA and SJFA at loggerheads, resulting in the AJFA being suspended and all the Ayrshire clubs being refused permission to play their Scottish Cup ties. The Thistle played in black and white, and won the Irvine & District Cup in 1903.

#### LUGAR BOSWELL

Joined the SAL in 1926 when they stepped up from the Juveniles. Won the SAL in the first season they joined. As an SAL member they won the Ayrshire Cup in 1928 and 1929. In 1929 they played in five cup finals, winning three.

#### NOTE

In it's 12 years the SAL was the home to a total of 23 clubs, today only five of these clubs are left, it highlights the social change in south Ayrshire, and how much the district depended on the coal industry. In the 1990's history had repeated itself and once more South Ayrshire is in decline. In 12 years time will those surviving five clubs still be here? Only time will tell.

# THE BIG SOUTH AYRSHIRE RESULTS

## AUCHINLECK TALBOT

1929-30	H v Irvine LMS	8-0
30-31	A v Kello	8-3
24-25	H v Hurlford TH	7-1
25-26	H v Croneberry	6-1
21-22	A v Kello	6-2
30-31	H v Lugar	6-4

## MUIRKIRK ATHLETIC

1923-24	H v Croneberry	9-1
25-26	A v Mossblown	7-5
26-27	H v Cumnock	6-0

## CRONEBERRY EGLINGTON:

1925-26	H v Mossblown	9-2
23-24	H v Kello	8-1
28-29	H v Dalmellington	8-1
27-28	H v Annbank Prim.	6-0
28-29	H v Burnfoothill	6-0
28-29	A v Girvan	6-0
27-28	H v Dalmellington	6-1

## LUGAR BOSWELL THISTLE

1927-28	H v Irvine LMS	9-0
27-28	H v Annbank Prim.	7-4
27-28	A v Girvan	6-1

## GIRVAN JUNIORS

1927-28	H v Talbot	8-0
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## BENWHAT HEATHERBELL

1928-29	H v Lugar	9-2
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## CUMNOCK JUNIORS

1922-23	H v Muirkirk Ath	12-0
30-31	H v Benwhat	8-0
25-26	H v Glenbuck Ch.	7-0
25-26	H v Talbot	7-1
26-27	H v Galston	7-1
23-24	A v Skares	6-0
29-30	H v Croneberry	6-1

## NEW CUMNOCK UNITED

1925-26	H v Kello Rovers	7-3
23-24	A v Talbot	6-0
23-24	A v Skares	6-2
25-26	A v Mossblown	6-3

## GLENBUCK CHERRY-PICKERS

1924-25	H v Hurlford Th.	7-0
30-31	H v Kello Rovers	6-0

## KELLO ROVERS

1929-30	H v Irvine LMS	11-0
26-27	H v Croneberry	7-0
29-30	H v Croneberry	7-1
29-30	H v Annbank Prim.	7-2
27-28	H v Talbot	6-2
28-29	H v Lugar	6-2

## GLENAFTON ATHLETIC

1930-31	H v Croneberry	8-1
30-31	A v Croneberry	8-1
31-32	A v Lugar	8-1
31-32	H v Kello Rovers	7-0
31-32	H v Cumnock	6-0

## DALMELLINGTON UNITED

1928-29	H v Lugar Boswell	7-0
28-29	H v Irvine LMS	6-0

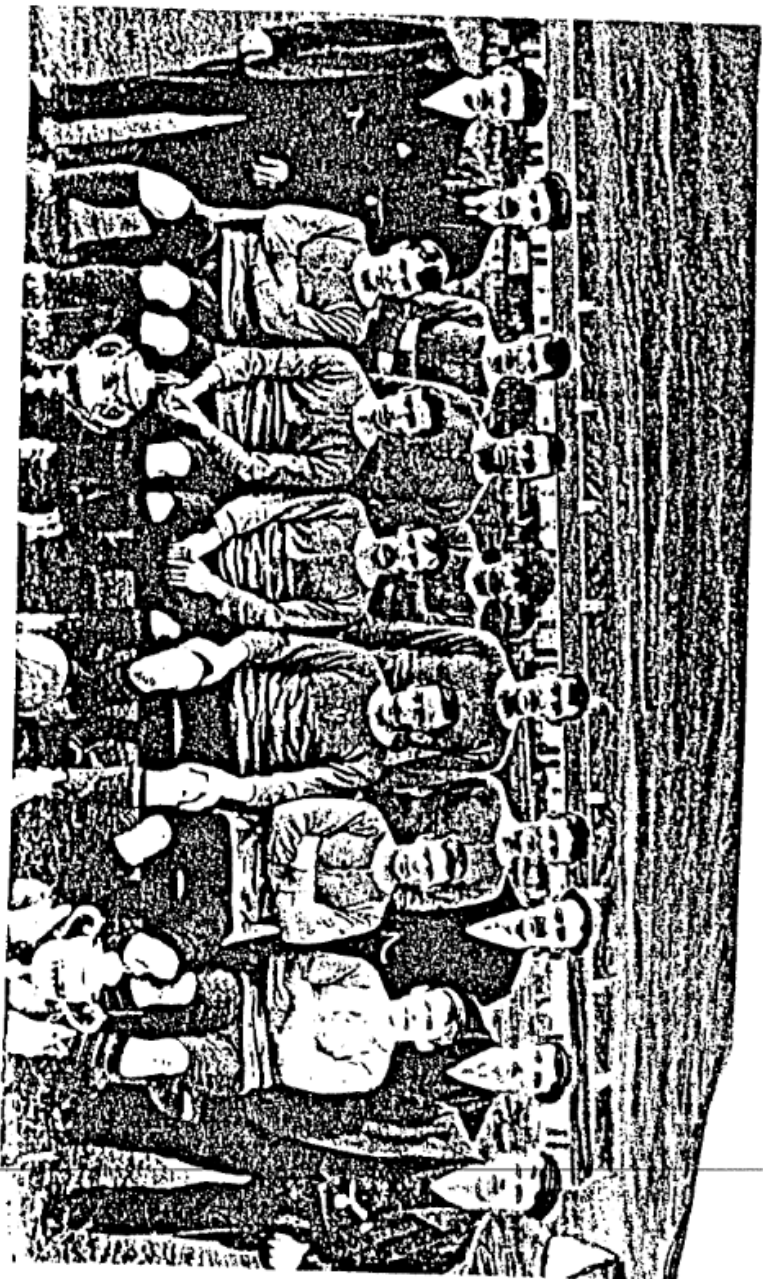
## BIGGEST WINNING MARGIN

Cumnock 12 Muirkirk Ath 0

## BIGGEST DRAW

Lugar 5 Talbot 5 1926-27

Most of the big results came at the end of the season when scratch sides were entered to give future players a trial. Another reason was the fact that some teams didn't have the players so people from the crowd were recruited to make up the numbers. At such an early stage in the Junior game it was quite remarkable that the above results were the only big hammerings in the SAL.



A typical South Ayrshire club during the time of the South Ayrshire League. Here we have Benwhat Heatherbell in all their glory. In the background is one of the miners rows that made up the settlement of Benwhat. Heatherbell's Ground was well over 1000ft above sea level.

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