

Made of Wood from the
Dool Tree, Leslie Green.

THE DULE TREE AT LESLIE GREEN

Alan Donnelly had recorded The Dule Tree, Leslie Green, among his *Made of the Wood* inscriptions, and so it was included in our Mauchline Anniversary Book with a note that it was the old name for a hanging tree, although at the time it was not possible to find out anything more about it. Dule, or dool, trees were used as gallows for public hangings.

Only recently when I found a paper knife with the inscription *Made of the Wood from the Dool Tree, Leslie Green* (shown above) and a needle book with a photograph of the tree had also come to light (also shown here, courtesy of Ian Smith), I initiated a new search and this has provided further information. Leslie is a large village in Fife, west of Glenrothes. According to an official Conservation Area Plan in 2010,



the tree was said to be the place where hangings and other punishments took place in the mediaeval period. It was felled on 13 October 1903, at which time a newspaper report stated that it had been used for hangings in the

time of James VI (1566 - 1625). The report continued to say that the branches of the tree were sold by auction, after keen bidding, for £6 – very probably to Smiths of Mauchline. Later, the village's War Memorial was built on the site of the tree.

Jane Bowen



We are very grateful to Tommy Manson, the President of the Kirkcaldy Stamp and Postcard Club, for allowing us to use the image "The Dule Tree removed 13 October

1903" taken from his Web Sites www.thefifepost.com and www.kirkcaldystampclub.co.uk and obtained through the good offices of Tony Connor.

A SUPERB EXAMPLE OF THE CARVER'S ART

It is not often that one relates carving with Mauchline Ware. Most usually the two ideas come together in talking about what have generally been called 'Blind Man's Snuff Boxes'; though whether these heavily carved boxes which have featured in previous articles in the Journal, most recently in Journal 91, April 2016, were actually carved by a blind man or are in any way linked to Mauchline Ware is, I think, still open to question. Recently, however, I came across a quite different carved piece, which with its pen and ink decoration, has at least one common feature with early Mauchline pieces. This is a good sized Toddy Ladle. Toddy incidentally was a brew of whisky, hot water and sugar, popular in Scotland from the mid 18th century, if not earlier.

This is no miniature piece, from tip of handle to end of bowl, 15 inches long; two ladlefuls would provide a generous helping of toddy for all save the most hardened drinker, and judging by the way the colour darkens from the handle tip, which is the usual gold colour of Mauchline pieces, to the deep mahogany shade of the bowl, it would appear that at one time, it had been regularly used for serving the brew. The handle ends in a flat ellipse on which there is a rectangular pen and ink drawing of a scene from Burns poem, 'Willie brew'd a peck o' maut', which often appears on Mauchline Snuff Boxes, below which is the legend 'It is the moon I ken her horn'. The drawing is surrounded on either side by bunches of thistles. What makes the ladle really exceptional, however, is that it has been carved from a single piece of wood. The three apparently twisted stems which make up the body of the handle are not as first seems

likely, clever separate linking pieces but part of the whole, so well carved that each strand is now completely separate from the others, save where they come together at the handle and bowl - surely a labour of love for some special person.

Jane Bowen

