

## **Laidlaw's Bakery, Hardgate, Haddington** by Margaret Laidlaw

Charles W. Laidlaw bought the bakery belonging to Daniel Stott about 1928. Mr Stott's son had been killed on a motorcycle and his father lost interest in the bakery.

The next move made by Mr Laidlaw was to buy the next-door property at 8 Hardgate, known then as the King's Arms.

The new Bakery, Shop, Tearoom and Kitchen as well as a three-bedroom house were built with a steel-framed structure by Richard Baillie, and the new building was opened for business at the end of 1931.

During this early period of the new business trade expanded rapidly with army contracts and an expansion into the local villages with a van service. A second van was purchased in 1936. This van traded on the west side of Haddington.

The war years showed a continued expansion and with the return to peace the staff who had been on war service returned to civilian work. At this time the staff included six bakers, one confectioner, a pie-shell lady, one cleaner, three shop and three tearoom staff. Up to the closure of the tearoom in 1958 all the cooking was done by Mr Laidlaw. A three-course meal for regular attenders to the tearoom was set at one shilling and ten pence (just under 10 pence today).

A third van was added to the fleet in 1948.

Charles W. Laidlaw died in late 1960 and the business continued under the watchful eye of Moira Laidlaw, his widow, who, along with her son Kenneth continued their stewardship of the business until a shortage of staff and retirements along with the fuel crisis of 1973 led to the eventual closure of the business as a retail bakery that year.

A smaller bakery had been built within the building at the rear of 8 Hardgate. This became 3 Tyne Close and Kenneth Laidlaw supplied Laidlaw's pies along with some bread products for the next 28 years.

The business closed on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2002.