

## Lenabo - a lasting memory

My father was born in 1909 near the industrial city of Bahia Blanca about 400 miles south west of Buenos Aires, his father George (born in 1874 near Longside) having emigrated from Aberdeen about 1900. A big contrast from rural Buchan to being a railway engine driver 7,500 miles away! Shortly after relocating to Mendoza the family moved back to the UK. My grandfather was then a munitions train driver in France and my father (James) went to school in Kittybrewster, Aberdeen - a big contrast from the foothills of the Andes.

I recall my Dad talking about holidays at Nether Kinmundy during WW 1 - an impact on him was the sight of the airships from the station at Lenabo. In the late 1990s shortly after a business trip near Cardington, Bedfordshire I mentioned to him the size of the hangers there. This prompted his talking in detail about the R 101 airship which crashed in its maiden overseas voyage in France on 5 October 1930 effectively ending British airship development. However, his recollection of airships went back much further to Lenabo which was built in 1915 and demolished in 1920. Sometimes referred to as Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Longside but not to be confused with RAF Longside, the airship station was just along the road from Home Farm Nether Kinmundy - the rail line between RNAS Lenabo and Longside was near the farm house.

Maybe an insight into the terrain is the meaning of Lenabo - from the Gaelic "lannam bo" meaning "wet meadow of the cows" - and the use of peat to fire the steam powered shovels that, ironically, were used to remove the peat during the construction phase!

He had clear recollections of the "soos" (Doric for pigs) and could readily have seen them taking off and landing. He mentioned to me a girl who seemingly was an airship captain's daughter who, I think, he went to see at the base.



NS6 at Lenabo

A Salute to Lenabo was penned in 1969 by William L Morgan - a former naval person at Sheerness, Barrow-in-Furness and Lenabo Airship Station, 1916-1920. I liked his concluding verse:

There is a land, a treeless land,  
Where all the bravest go;  
It raineth every day and night,  
We call it "Lenabo".

Contributed by Norman J Penny  
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