

Tales of the Riverman

Issue 3



Lipton and the Glasgow Humane Society

I drink Lipton's Tea, I like Lipton's Tea, I have a "directors" chair with Lipton's Tea on it. I like the story of the man who was born and brought up in the Gorbals (The family lived in a four room tenement at 10 Crown Street, Hutchesontown) opposite Glasgow Green and who used to come down to the Park and sit with the "Cronies" at the Glasgow Humane Society boathouse and learn about boat building and boat handling.



George Geddes



Sir Thomas Lipton



Benjamin Parsonage

Most people will have heard of Sir Thomas Lipton Born: May 10, 1848, Glasgow

Sir Thomas Johnstone Lipton, 1st Baronet, KCVO was a Scotsman of Ulster-Scots parentage who was a self-made man, merchant, and yachtsman. He created the Lipton tea brand and was the most persistent challenger in the history of the America's Cup for yachting

He and his friends formed a club which raced toy yachts on the pools of High Fields near Crown Street and around this time he carved and rigged Shamrock, his first model boat.

He claimed he was "never happier...than when in the atmosphere of ships, sailors, boats and the waterside generally"

His love of water and boats continued throughout his life

The following is from the Minutes of the Glasgow Humane Society 1905

Mr. Geddes (Glasgow Humane Society Officer) was looked upon as a sort of aquatic father, highly esteemed by all the frequenters, most genial in his manner, and always ready in any emergency with his advice and assistance. In the boat shed he and his successors were permitted to do some boat building on their own account; and the privilege was extended to the late G. L. Watson to build a model yacht with his own hands, quite a model racer, a type of yacht that has now become so general, and which established his reputation as one of the foremost yacht designers of his day. Sir Thomas Lipton also made his *debut* at the Glasgow Humane Society, for when he was a boy he acted as coxswain for those who wanted a good steersman; then at times he hired for his own pleasure, and that was the beginning of his taste for boating, and afterwards for yachting.

Another famous Scottish boat and yacht building family the McGruer family also frequented the Glasgow Humane Society and Ben Parsonage and Ewing McGruer were good friends and many were the discussions regarding modern developments in boat building and oar making. The McGruer's then based at Rutherglen collaborated with George Geddes in the designing of new lifeboats