Foreword

It is an honour to introduce this History of West Dunbartonshire. The concept in commissioning the book was to draw together the history of the disparate parts of West Dunbartonshire in one major publication in order to place the many different aspects of this geographic area in perspective, in terms of social, economic and historic importance and the diversity of its cultures. There have been many books and pamphlets about the various communities that were drawn together ten years ago when the reorganisation of Scottish local government took place and West Dunbartonshire Council was formed from disaggregation of Strathclyde Regional Council and the merging of two District Councils. Corporately, this book engages with this area's rich legacy and marks the prospects for cross-cultural and economic regeneration.

Professor Ian Brown and the distinguished group of historians who have written the book have done a remarkable job. They have not only compiled a well-researched document with facts and figures; they have looked at this area as a place where people settled, worked and created world-class industries and art. Their research, reaching even before the Christian age, places West Dunbartonshire at the heart of Scottish history as a significant strategic area bordered by the River Clyde, Loch Lomond and the Kilpatrick Hills. This comes across in each of the chapters in terms of military and political importance and industrial and creative development throughout the ages.

This publication rightly places West Dunbartonshire at the heart of Scotland's collective identity. It could not have come into being without the support of elected colleagues and officers of the Council, who immediately recognised the importance of drawing all our communities together in one publication. It connects our past with the present and points us towards the future. It makes a clear statement, not just about geographic location, but about the identity of all the communities that define West Dunbartonshire in a socio-political context.

*Cllr Denis Agnew
Convener of Cultural Services
March 2006*

*Gerry McInerney
Director of Corporate Services
March 2006*