

The Hamlets

GAZETTE

Issue 7 - Summer 2023

SUMMER EDITION

SIZZLING SPECIALS

*Travelling to the Heart of Darkness
Local Walks & Path Updates*

*Fife's other Neuk
e-bikes and more...*

With lots more inside...

COMMUNITY

*Forthcoming events to
community council updates*

GIFFORDTOWN - KINLOCH - CHARLOTTETOWN - EDENTOWN

Pets, pictures and other things...



Summer 2023

Welcome

The recent addition of 'Gazette Reps' to most of the hamlets has been a very successful move, leading to lots of additional content, with some first time contributors putting some excellent pieces forward, as well as the regular contributors continuing to submit high quality, well researched articles of tremendous interest. Well done and a sincere thank you to everyone involved in the creation and production of the gazette and those who support it, particularly the community council who continue to fund the whole cost at circa £250 per issue.

Closing date for submissions for the next issues is around 18th September. Please send any articles to your local rep:

Kinloch: Jessica Balfour

Giffordtown: Nick Bailey

Charlottetown: Catherine Ellison

Edentown: Position Vacant. Apply within.

Or you can speak to them personally to work out if your article is suitable. You can also send to: thehamletsgazette@gmail.com or to WhatsApp 07938828589.

What makes a good article? That's a big question which has quite a few answers depending on your point of view. What the editors find 'good' though is anything that you've taken the time and effort to put down on paper, or email, and send it in. We've often said it can be a few lines of what is going on, or a more complex piece which requires much research. Or a photo! The one thing that ties them together is that they are written by the locals, or families who have a strong connection back to our community. That means, if it is interesting to you, then share that interest and hopefully that will strike a chord with some who reads it and lead to a shared connection. Isn't that what community is about? Last issue we had an easy 'spot the microscope' competition. It's a bit harder this time. See if you can find it hidden amongst the pages.

All content will normally be published as received. We reserve the right to make changes and some articles may not be published. Views expressed in the articles reflect those of the author(s) and are not necessarily the view(s) of G&DCC or the editors. Articles are published in good faith and have not been fact checked by the editors. We (the editors and G&DCC) accept no liability for any loss or damage of any kind caused by this publication.

Neil Brooks, Doug Wightman, Gillian Storrar

Take a look at what's
inside this bumper issue...



Photographs

Inner Front Cover

Community Council Update	2
Fife's Other Neuk	4
What Do I Do?	6
Good To Eat	8
Fife Show & Porridge Bread	9
Pierhead Painters	10
Village Hall News	12
A Scots Alphabet	13
Lucky Ewe	14
Island Hopping in the Philippines	15
Travelling to the Heart of Darkness	16
Local Walks - Maspie Den	20
e-Bike Special	22
The Book Group	26
The Hermit's Hoard	28
Getting Into Shape	31
Really Local, Local Walks	32
Paths Working Group Update	33
Interesting Times	34
Roadside Flower Tubs	36
Kinloch House - A Pictorial History	38
Pumpkin	39
A Postcard From Los Angeles	40
The Giffordtown Writers	42
Good to Know	
Back Page	

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Chair's Quarterly Report



Neil Brooks
Chair &
Secretary

Introduction

Thank you to all members of the Giffordtown & District Community Council for their hard work and diligence. Also thanks to the members of the public who pass on their comments to the committee or turn out to the regular meetings.

Elections - Why Bother?

This is just a reminder. By the time the next gazette hits your doorstep, the Community Council Elections will have taken place. Fife Council will release more information in August. If you are considering putting yourself forward, you will be able to download a candidate nomination pack from the Fife Council website on 14th August. A vote is held when there are more candidates wishing to stand than there are places available. This means that, in some areas, there will be a vote, as there will be more people wanting to stand than places available on the community council. In others, there won't be a vote, as there will either be the exact number of people as there are places, or the minimum number of people required to form the community council. If you're even a little bit curious as to what goes on at a CC meeting, come along the the next one at the hall at 7:30pm on 3rd July to observe. You can also ask questions or make your

views known, so you don't need to be a Community Councillor to have a say in what goes on within the community.

Anyone aged over 16 who lives in the community is eligible to be a Community Councillor. Ideally, there would be a cross section from all the hamlets.

Here is a copy of an email recently received:

“Dear Community Council

I refer to my previous email advising that the Community Council Elections will take place on 28 September 2023. The Community Council web page on Fife Council website has been updated to advise of the forthcoming election date. Anyone interested in standing as a candidate for their local Community Council will have to apply to be registered to vote by Monday 10 July 2023, see website for details. Link to website - [Community Councils | Fife Council](#)

Further information in relation to nominations packs etc will be provided in due course.

Kind regards

Community Council Liaison Officer.”

Finance Matters

Annual accounts for year 2022-2023 audited and signed off. Balance is £5407. An annual budget forecast was presented and approved. Income will be in the region of £3664, expenditure in the region of £7185 with a projected year-end balance in March 2024 of £1886. However, this is a

projection only, not a commitment. As such, all expenditure (above £100) will be itemised in future agendas and discussed at the scheduled meetings. Monique Sanders announced she would be stepping down from the role of Treasurer now that the annual accounts were successfully completed. We owe Monique our heartfelt thanks for her diligent management of the CC finances for many years which carries with it significant responsibility. Andrew Christie agreed to step into the role of Treasurer, at least until the elections. He was duly proposed, seconded and elected as Treasurer.

e-bikes:

The two e-bikes were delivered and the loan scheme launched on 1st June. In brief, any resident can borrow one or both bikes from half a day to two weeks. You can go shopping, for a picnic, out to lunch, a tour, take them on holiday. In fact, anything you would do if they actually belonged to you. There is a disclaimer to sign which means that if you break it, you fix it and the Community Council has no liability for accidents etc. Hopefully everyone can see the sense in this. See a full evaluation report and some reports from people who have borrowed them later in the Gazette.

Flower Tubs

The 'Flower Tub Working Group' has done a superb job of distributing the tubs amongst the hamlets. They really do brighten up the road and are a clear link between the communities. There is a full report later in this issue.

Paths Working Group

It's fair to say there have been significant steps made with this group since the last issue of the gazette. Which is somewhat gratifying for a Paths group! In particular, the levelling of the Coffin Road to make it passable has been a great success and has been done without interfering with the rustic and rural nature of the path. It is gradually returning to a green pathway and makes access onwards to the Quarry Path diversion easy. The diversion path was possibly not as path like as was envisioned, but nevertheless, continued efforts by the PWG means that there is clear access all the way to Birnie Loch. There is a PWG report and a report on how to use the path later in this issue. In addition, the PWG continue to work with Lairds to sort out the other aspect of the path to the West. Watch this space.

Birnie Loch Parking

At some point in early June, the parking meter went live. It is too early to tell what people think, but informal enquiries seem to indicate that the general public are getting to grips with it. Related to that, if you have been round the lochs recently, you will have seen the path has been tidied up and a lot of bushes cut back.

Road Conditions

We have been in continual contact with Fife Council about various matters to do with the condition of our local roads, from potholes, to verges to gullies. The most effective way to show you the result of this is to share an email recently received from the relevant department

Gullies: "The gullies that are broadly along Woodside house, just south of Charlottetown on the East side of the B937, are always blocking. These were identified as outletting into a soakaway installed below an extensive length of footway. As permission will not be granted by Scottish Water to outlet the gullies into the adjacent

combined sewer the resolution will be to replace the stone in the soakaway to improve its efficiency. This work is on the list of minor drainage works to be considered for funding. At this time I am unable to advise on a start date."

Flooding: "below the rail bridge between Giffordtown and the Recycling Centre. We attended with a vactor today and located and cleaned the road drainage system. This system outlets into a soakaway in a field to the east of the rail line and was found to be working once cleaned. The other factor identified which has caused standing water at this location constantly over the past few years, is water rising through the road on the west side of the bridge. Records indicate Scottish Water have no mains supply in this area therefore the rising water is due to a burst in a private water supply or, more likely, an underground spring. We intend digging at this location to locate the source of the water and direct it into our road drainage system if it is spring water. It is anticipated this work will be done in the coming months." To be honest, it has proved difficult to get things done, as the response has often been that there is a lack of available resources or funds. But we keep trying.

Speeding

Another long standing issue which again seems to be subject to a lack of resources - this time from the police. Three volunteers from Giffordtown recently received police training in the proper use and deployment of the official speed radar gun. Part of the training was an actual deployment just north of Woodside house. In the hour we were there, five motorists were noted going over the threshold which is 47mph for us as volunteers. This was despite 5 of us standing out like sore thumbs in our hi-viz vests. We would like to do more deployments but are actually hampered by getting a hold of the equipment.

A piece of equipment called Automatic Speedwatch is being investigated for installation. This records the speeds of vehicles automatically and is in place with several police forces in England. We are in discussion with our local force to make Fife the first in Scotland to adopt such a system.

We are still looking to recruit more volunteers for this as the more people that can go out, the more chances are that we can make up a team of three, which is the minimum that the police let us deploy with, partly for safety and partly for corroboration.

Fire Equipment

An extinguisher and blanket was delivered to each household in the area. Many thanks to those hardy volunteers who hauled these around the community and popped them into the doors. Also thanks to those that have put a donation towards the cost. All funds received go back into the pot and are used to fund future projects.

Come to the meetings

Every resident is welcome to come along to our meetings. Next meeting 3rd July in the Hall at 7:30pm. There's probably a lot of other things that you'd prefer to be doing on a Monday evening for about an hour and a half. Especially if you've had a busy day. But there is a good reason to come along. The job of the community council is two fold. Firstly to represent the community to Fife Council, via the two local councillors, Donald Lothian and Gary Holt. They can do a better job if they see the community itself has strong representation for an issue. Secondly, it is to do what it can within its power, capability and authority to improve the community as they see fit. We can do a better job of this with your help. You can see examples of the sort of things discussed amongst these articles.

Come along. It's actually quite interesting and rewarding.

Fife's Other Neuk

by Doug Wightman

Come with me to a part of the Fife coast, with beautiful villages, fascinating architecture, industrial heritage, wayward Greek statues, literary connections, and delightful cafes. Blessedly free of the braying of 4x4 owners from the 'home counties' clogging up the streets and buying up properties for holiday homes. Where is this paradise? I'm talking about the stretch of Fife's coast from Limekilns to Culross. Apart from Culross, this part of the county is little mentioned in tourist guides and has yet to feature in the Sunday Times travel pages, and long may it remain so.

Come off the motorway following the signs for Rosyth, and get onto the road to Limekilns that way, avoiding Dunfermline, which has its own charms, but a lot of traffic.

As you drop down into Limekilns you pass some

interesting 19th century architecture, including a very fine primary school, and find yourself at the seaside. Park the car and take a wander through this historic town, where there are two delightful cafés where you can fortify yourself before the rest of your trip. In the back street is the Sundial café, in a converted 19th c. industrial building.



Just along from it is Coorie by the Coast. If you can get over its rather twee name, treat yourself to one of their breakfasts. Both establishments make good coffee. It also doubles as a hotel should you be so impressed by this part of the world that you want to stay longer.

On the waterfront is the Ship Inn, which is said to have been the inspiration for the Admiral Benbow Inn in Treasure Island, though if my memory serves me correctly the Admiral Benbow was in the Bristol Channel. Stevenson was obviously familiar with Limekilns, as, in Kidnapped, David Balfour and Alan Breck were rowed away from Limekilns. In the time of Kidnapped, there was a regular ferry service from Limekilns to Bo'ness across the Forth and in those days both were industrial centres. Limekilns dates back to the 14th century, with its natural harbour sheltered from the elements by the steep rocky ridge behind the town, known as the Ghauts, and as the name suggests, it was a centre for the production of lime for agricultural and building work. Up a lane off the back

street is the King's cellar, an ancient looking building dating from 1362, now a masonic lodge, but sadly not open to the public.

Walk along the seaside promenade, past what is a quite acceptable beach for a picnic until the road forks, and bear right, walking up the hill to Charlestown, or better still, cycle up its cobbles as I did last year, pretending you're on the Koppenberg in the Tour of Flanders.

You have now arrived in Charlestown, and on your right is the village green, surrounded by the cottages of the Broomhill estate, the home of the Earl of Elgin. Yes, he of the marbles.

The village was established by Charles Bruce, 5th Earl of Elgin in 1756, and is said to be laid out in the pattern of his initials C and E. I'm not entirely convinced by this, but nevertheless it is a delightful little village, and is clearly laid out to some kind of plan. Elgin's wealth came from the local industries of coal mining, limestone quarrying and lime production. To this end he built the harbour and a massive limeworks, which although they ceased production in 1956, can still be seen. Walk around the village admiring the well-kept gardens, and go into the Broomhill estate where there is pleasant walking, which seems to be actively encouraged by the proprietor, the current Earl of Elgin. His house is a magnificent example of 18th century architecture, built originally in 1707 to the design of Sir William Bruce, described as a 'gentleman architect', but remodelled many times over the succeeding years. Whatever happened to gentleman architects?



In 1801, Thomas the 7th Earl was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty to the Sublime Porte of Selim III Sultan of Turkey. He petitioned the British government to pay for a team of artists to come to Athens to record the sculptures which were in a dilapidated state following a huge explosion in the parthenon while it was being used as an arsenal. The Government rejected his request, and when he saw that these priceless treasures were being burned to make lime (how appropriate), he bought them from the local governor, or so he said, though this is very much disputed. He intended that they would be brought to his estate in Fife where they would have been displayed, but his finances were under pressure

from an expensive divorce, and he sold them to the British Museum, where they have resided ever since. He sold them at considerable loss to himself after the expense of transporting them to England (about £4 million in today's money), and the museum acquired them for less than was being offered by other bidders, including Napoleon. Their presence in England is of course a source of a great deal of debate, and the Greek government continues to lobby for their return. The British Museum, our present government, and for that matter all preceding governments have declined to contemplate this, a dark stain on the reputation of this country. (We all know what a great reputation our country has). It is a matter of international outrage that these astonishing works of art, some of the greatest art works and historical records of humanity are not in their true home in Athens, where there is a magnificent and beautiful museum just waiting for them.

Retrace your steps by the village green, cross the road and walk down the lane on the left of the Inn at Charlestown for a few hundred yards, then turn down a steep, possibly muddy path, and arriving at the bottom, turn left for a few yards, when an extraordinary sight greets your eyes. On your right is the harbour of Charlestown, but on your left are the old limekilns. This small harbour is very peaceful today, but in its time it must have been a hive of activity, exporting lime, limestone and coal. It even had its day in the sun in 1918 when parts of the German grand fleet from Scapa Flow were brought here for breaking up.



The Limekilns themselves are spectacular, 110 m long and 10m high, looking like the cyclopean walls of Troy. They are regarded as one of the most important industrial remains in Scotland and indeed UK, and in their day produced a third of the lime in Scotland, mainly for soil improvement. I've never seen an industrial site like it, and if you have any interest in industrial archaeology you must visit. It had its own railway system, linked to the main line from Dunfermline, and of course employed the residents of the Broomhall Estate, which was an early pioneer in the Scottish Improving Movement which had led to the establishment of some 500 planned villages. These were mostly agricultural and Charlestown was unusual for being industrial. When you're tired of gawping at the limekilns, continue along the road until you rejoin the road to Limekilns. There's a fascinating collection of houses along this road; one of them could almost pass for a Frank Lloyd Wright, and the other looks like something out of Alice in Wonderland.



Just time now for a cup of tea in Limekilns. Then there's always Culross...

What do I do?

Major Andrew Christie, Royal Army Medical Corps
Medical Officer (General Practitioner)

Andrew and family moved into Woodside House just before Christmas 2019.



The role of an Army General Practitioner (GP) is a unique and privileged position which has seen me serve in four continents, providing medical care from the deserts of Mali to the Prairies of Canada. Like all doctors, Army GPs hold a medical degree and undertake their initial hospital and general practice training after completing medical school. After these two years as a junior doctor, Army doctors, then undertake their initial military training. As a Professionally Qualified Officer (PQO), this is undertaken at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where all British Army officers train.

On completion of basic military training, most Army doctors join a regiment and serve as a General Duties Medical Officer (GDMO), usually for up to 3 years. This is where they develop their military and clinical skills and gain experience of working in various military clinical settings. After completing time as a GDMO, Army doctors choose to specialise, either into a branch of hospital practice or undertake training to become a GP. Training as an Army GP takes place over 3 years and usually sees a return to working in a hospital gaining further experience in clinical specialities before working in both military and civilian general practice. All Army GPs meet the same standards as civilian GP trainees in order to become Members of the Royal College of General Practitioners, before being appointed to a role such as a Regimental Medical Officer (RMO).

6 Summer 2023

As an RMO, you are the GP to the regiment, responsible for the soldiers' medical care whilst in their home location, as well as ensuring they are fit enough to deploy on military activity. Additionally, you are the medical advisor to the Commanding Officer (CO) of the regiment, providing advice in areas such as occupational medicine, travel medicine, tropical medicine and public health medicine. Serving as a RMO brings you into the fold of the regiment you serve with, exposing you to the traditions of that unit and opportunities for experiences outside of the medical world.

My RMO appointment was to the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (SCOTS DG) a Light Cavalry unit based in Leuchars. During my time with the SCOTS DG, I deployed to Mali as part of the United Nation MINUSMA mission, known as Operation NEWCOMBE in the UK. As the Senior Medical Officer to the UKs Long Range Reconnaissance Group (LRRG) I was responsible for delivering routine general practice as well as emergency care to the soldiers, operating in very high temperatures in the Malian desert. The LRRG was deployed in a reconnaissance role, operating to disrupt Terrorist Armed Group activity and providing protection to the local population as part of the wider UN stabilisation mission.

On operations, an RMO is expected to deliver the usual range of normal general practice but is also required to deliver emergency trauma care should a service person



sustain an acute injury. This could be caused by gunshot wounds, explosions or road traffic incidents, but could otherwise be musculoskeletal injuries from things such as falls, trips or crush injuries. Due to the challenging working environment, often in isolated and basic locations, disease outbreak management is frequently an important part of an RMOs role. Outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting, influenza or COVID can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of a unit on operations. As the principal medical advisor, the RMO is often called upon to provide clinical input into medical planning, advising on medical evacuation and treatment pathways to ensure British service personnel receive the care they need.

Following an appointment as an RMO, Army GPs usually serve in a number of other roles to develop their experience. This can include running a medical centre to provide medical care to military personnel and in some cases their families, initially as the Deputy Senior Medical Officer (DSMO) before becoming a Senior Medical Officer (SMO). Military medical centres are located in both the UK as well as in a number of overseas locations. These appointments give you the opportunity to widen your experience as a clinician, often dealing with a wider range of medical issues than you would normally have to deal with in the UK, such as maternity care and paediatrics. Additionally, in most overseas locations, Army GPs provide urgent and emergency medical care. During my time as DSMO in Dhekelia, Cyprus, I was required to co-ordinate the local ambulance provision and as SMO to the British Army Training Unit Suffield, in Canada, I could be found evacuating injured personnel in a helicopter. Serving overseas brings additional challenges around ensuring suitable hospital care is available, logistical challenges of maintaining medical supplies as well as ensuring good relationships are maintained with local host nation medical services. These very busy jobs are very rewarding and provide a unique experience for an Army GP.

As well as clinical practice, Army GPs can develop other roles such as training new GPs, as a GP trainer, as well as supporting fellow GPs in a role as an appraiser or working in academic practice. Other opportunities include staff appointments, usually based in headquarters (HQ), supporting the delivery of medical care. I have recently been posted as a Staff Officer to the headquarters of Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC), located at Whittington Barracks, near Lichfield. DPHC is responsible for the running of general practice across the whole of Defence, providing care to nearly 160,000 service personnel and their families both in the UK and overseas. As a GP staff officer, I am responsible for providing clinical and managerial advice to support the



response to many of the healthcare issues that face Defence. Clinical Staff Officers provide advice into the solutions and development of policies to ensure the medical services meet the healthcare needs of service personnel as well as supporting the Armed Forces to deploy personnel around the globe.

For the past 20 years I have been fortunate to provide medical care to British service personnel and their families across the globe. From regimental duties, to responsibility as a both a Deputy and Senior Medical Officer and now as a Staff Officer, I have experienced a wide range of opportunities to utilise both my military and clinical skills to meet the healthcare needs of British Service personnel. The work of a GP within the Army is fascinating and whilst we share many similarities with our NHS counterparts, the unique challenges of providing care around the globe, often with limited equipment, prolonged timelines to get patients to a hospital and with challenges of climate, tropical disease and the battlefield, mean that Military General Practice has made for a very different experience than I would have otherwise expected when I started at medical school all those years ago.



Spiced Scrambled Eggs

by Toutbibe

Ingredients for two

Unsalted butter for frying
Medium onion sliced finely
Medium tomato chopped
Fresh chilli to taste!
Tablespoon of chopped fresh coriander leaves
½ teaspoonful of turmeric
Salt
4 eggs
Buttered toast



This is a simple dish, but full of unusual flavours combinations, and a lunchtime favourite chez Toutbibe. Fresh coriander is one of the kitchen's greatest pleasures, aromatic and refreshing, unless that is, you're one of the unlucky people who find it disgusting, describing it as soapy, or tasting rotten. This is a genetic phenomenon, so if you're a sufferer, stop reading now. It's an ancient herb, seed remains having been found in Tutankhamun's tomb, and even further back seed husk have been found in a cave in Israel, dating from 6-8,000 B.C. The name coriander is said to come from an ancient Greek word koris meaning a bedbug, as it is sometimes described as smelling like bedbugs. Now I don't know about you, but I love coriander, and I can't believe a crushed bedbug would smell nice. Perhaps someone could let me know. The earliest written form of the word is in Linear-B script; ko-ri ja-da-na. Just thought you'd like to know. Don't get me started about turmeric.

It grows happily in Fife, and will overwinter under glass, either under a cloche or in a cold greenhouse, in fact I think it's actually hardier than parsley. A sowing in mid-August will see you through the winter if you sow enough of it. The best versions for leaf production are Green Aroma or Leisure, though I've had perfectly good results with coriander seed from a food shop, preferably an Asian shop with a fast turnover.

Melt some unsalted butter in a shallow pan and gently fry the onion until it's golden, but not browned. Cook books often say a pinch of salt at this stage will make the onions sweeter, but I doubt if that's ever been subjected to a double-blind crossover peer-reviewed study. Add the tomatoes, chilli, coriander leaves, salt and turmeric. In an ideal world you'd skin the tomato and de-seed it. That's a bit of a faff for what's supposed to be a simple dish, but it's worth it if you can be bothered. You can always drain some tinned tomatoes and rinse the juice off; if it's too wet, the scrambled eggs will be a bit yucky.

Fry for a minute or two then add the beaten eggs, cook on a low heat until they're ready, and serve on buttered toast. I leave you to choose your toast. I have a personal preference for sliced plain bread, the kind in tartan greaseproof paper. It must be the thick sliced version however which seems to be available only in Sainsbury's.

A teacher asked her students to use the word "beans" in a sentence. "My father grows beans," said one girl. "My mother cooks beans," said a boy. A third student spoke up, "We are all human beans."

Q: Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building? A: Of course. The Empire State Building can't jump.

Fife Show

By Jessica Balfour

The Fife Show was held at Kinloss Park on 20th May this year, and the weather was kind. Mike Munro, Kinloch Farm, took two first prizes for his Jacob sheep, as well as a second and a third. We were all very proud of him. We were also thrilled to hear that Ben and Tom Munro came away with prizes for showing their lambs, and Sophie a rosette for her entry. Well done to them.

The picture shows Tom on the left and Ben on the right.



Porridge Bread (Gluten free)

By Blanche Leckie



Recipe from my dear cousin, Christine from our Scottish farming side of the family.

Stewart, my husband, enjoys a slice of this for breakfast, warmed and sometimes with cheese. Very filling and healthy.

500ml Plain Yogurt (we use Yeo Valley Organic)

500ml X 2 of Jumbo organic oats (I use the washed empty yogurt carton to measure)

250g Mixed Seeds (more or less if you prefer)

1 Egg

1 Tablespoon of Milk

1 Tablespoon of ground Almonds (optional)

1 Teaspoon of salt

2 Teaspoons of Baking Powder

1 large Banana or 2 small ones mashed

2lb loaf tin or 2x 1 lb tins lined with grease proof paper

We also add a handful of some plump cranberries or chopped dates or both

Mix well and divide into the baking tin or tins. Bake at 170 degrees fan oven for 40/45 mins - golden on top. Enjoy!

We often double the recipe and freeze.

Pierhead Painters

By Monique Sanders

A Painted Ship upon a painted Ocean.

A look at the pier-head painters, who captured Scotland's proud seafaring past.

Visit any Scottish fisheries museum and the visitor will see maritime paintings of Scotland's proud seafaring past. Alongside those executed with flair and sophistication are more simple depictions like the images produced by fisherman-turned painters. With the gradual demise of shipbuilding and the continuing decline in fishing, these simple ships' portraits provide a wonderful pictorial record of past industries.

These so-called pierhead painters were linked to a worldwide tradition that started in the middle of the 19th century, originating in Catholic countries like France and Italy. Usually painted on board, ships' portraits were bought by the vessel's captain and crew. Sometimes they were donated to a harbour-side church, their purpose votary: to give thanks for a lucky escape from shipwreck or piracy, or to ensure safety for future ventures.

In countries like Britain, less influenced by Catholic tradition, pierhead painting took longer to establish. Despite that, and helped by an explosion in merchant trading, by the 19th century, pierhead painting was widespread, with schools of artists springing up throughout the world including in America and China. In fact, a ship that 'sailed the seven seas' might be the subject of a pierhead painting in three continents.

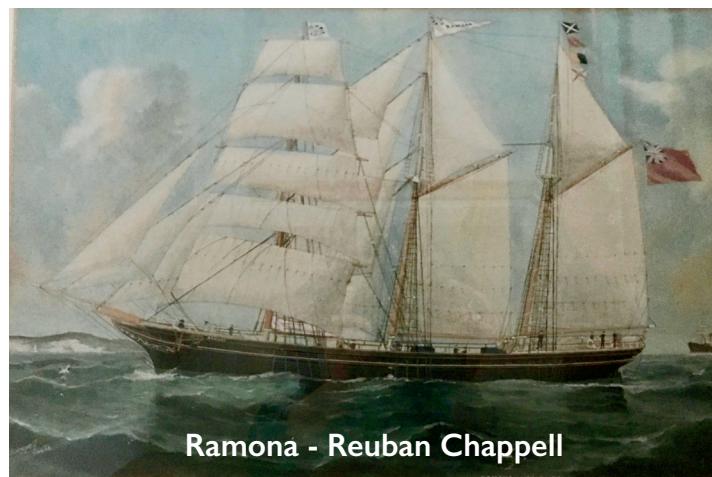
A ship's portrait generally showed a ship as it left the harbour, broadside on to display the rigging in detail. Sometimes two views of the same ship were included in the same painting: the broadside and the stern. Technical accuracy was of paramount importance and took precedence over mere artistry. Any blemishes, like patched sails or an untidy foredeck, were brushed out, while other details, such as the flags and the name of the vessel were exaggerated. Human figures were perfunctory, if included at all.

Often commissioned by ship builders or owners, paintings were also executed en plein air for on-the-spot sales to crew members. They would be prized as a kind of pictorial curriculum vitae, a record of service at sea and a memento of hard work and comradeship. For that reason, to satisfy men who knew their boats, a pierhead

painter needed a genuine knowledge of seamanship rather than artistic skill; many painters, in fact, started as fishermen, sign writers or in other work associated with the sea.

The 'pierhead painter', so-called because he literally sat on the pier, his subject at anchor before him, had to work in a hurry. Many just roughly sketched the outline of the vessel, then took it home to be filled in, sometimes with the help of family members. Water colours and gouache were the favoured media, easy to work with and fast-drying, unlike oils; wind-blown grit and sand added realism and texture.

Once bought, the painting could be rolled up in the sailor's kit bag or chest and transported home to be hung on cottage walls. This method of display, plus the often cheap materials used, did nothing to improve their quality.



I wonder how many families have found such paintings, a sort of folk art, hidden in their attics? We have certainly inherited two from John's family: one by a well-known artist from Goole, Reuben Chappell. It's a broadside view of a barquentine, Ramona, built at William Richards' boatyard in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, in 1891, and captained by John's grandfather, Haydn Sanders - at the age of 23 years - from Canada to Fowey with a cargo of wood. No doubt he bought the painting there, for Chappell had moved to Par, Cornwall, for health reasons in 1904. The other, in far worse condition is of the SS King David, painted by Italian pierhead painter, E. Roberto, built in Sunderland in 1963 and sunk by a German submarine near Fastnet in

1906; we think it belonged to John's father's mother's side of the family; her father was in the Royal Navy, son of an Irish coastguard.

As for the Scottish connection, here are listed some of the more well known ships' portraitists, examples of whose work can be found in the Scottish Fisheries Museum at Anstruther and elsewhere.



BOURNE, F.J. (1884 – 1894). Although Bourne was from Liverpool, the many examples of his work show how far he travelled in order to paint boats. The Scottish Fisheries Museum has at least three of his steam drifters:

- oil on board – KY152 'Pursuit', leaving harbour with a lighthouse in the background to the left and a sailing ship to the right.
- KY121 'Preston'
- YH (registered in Yarmouth) 'Thirty – Two' (YH 709)

CLARK, William (1803 – 1883). Born in Greenock, the son of a seaman, and apprentice to a house painter. His paintings depict the iron-built clippers of the 1870's and 1880's as well as steamers.

DOWINAR, B.M. (fl. 1850 – 1880). He painted shipping in the Firth of Forth, particularly those launched from the yards at Leith. The Bass Rock frequently appears in the background. His works, all in oils, featured early steamers as well as sailing ships, and were described as 'professional; and polished'. Aberdeen Art Gallery holds several of his works.

HARWOOD, Alexander (1873- 1943) Harwood moved to Aberdeen from his native Scarborough in 1901 and worked as a fish porter in the city's busy harbour for most of his life, while painting watercolours of the ships waiting in the port in his spare time. He was a prolific amateur artist and painted hundreds of portraits of Aberdeen trawlers, working in watercolours, oils and gouache. His paintings are a record of the Scottish fishing fleet, including the 'long trippers' or trawlers that left Aberdeen Harbour to work the fishing grounds off Iceland and the Faroes in the 1930's. His portrait of the steam trawler 'Barbara Robb' hangs in the Aberdeen Fisheries Museum.

SMITH, Arthur (fl. 1830 –1860). For twenty years, Smith was the unofficially approved artist of the Aberdeen shipbuilders, Alexander Hall & Sons. This company built schooners for the tea trade, ranging in size from 100 feet in length to over 2,000 tons in weight. Smith produced oil paintings of their early clipper and packet ships, depicted in perfect detail and often shown passing Girdleness or entering Aberdeen Harbour. Aberdeen Museum and Art Gallery holds works by Smith.

Other works in the Scottish Fisheries Museum at Anstruther include:

KY166 – 'Minniewood' : oil on board. Painted by Tom Gay, a fisherman, in 1954.

KY493 – 'Glenogil' : oil on canvas. Painted by George Wade in 1926

KY461 'Anster Fair' : oil on board. Painted by George Wade in 1898.



Village Hall News

by Doug Wightman

It's been a busy spring at the Hall since the last edition, though as usual, we're winding down a bit for the summer. However we'll soon be busy planning the winter programme (winter? What a depressing thought, as is the thought that by the time you read this, the nights will be drawing in!)

March 18th Tapas Night

An eager crowd of hispanophiles (Iberophiles?) enjoyed an evening of Spanish food and drink, patatas bravas, hams, chorizo, salads, savoury pastries etc. and even a selection of Spanish craft beers. As ever, food related events are always popular, so we'll need to think up something new for next year.



April 29th and 30th Soup and Bread Lunch

This was run in conjunction with the Open Studios weekend, and proved popular with visitors, particularly to Pat and Ian's studio, as well as hamletters who took the opportunity to catch up on the local news. Soup was provided by committee members, and some very good sourdough bread was bought from Auchtermuchty Co-op at a discounted rate, thanks to their scheme to support local communities. £180 was raised for Hall funds, and we agreed it would be worthwhile to repeat the event next year, with perhaps more publicity via the Open studios flyers.

May 3rd Annual General Meeting

I'm afraid the AGM as usual failed to arouse much interest in the general community with only a handful of residents turning up. Long gone are the days of the 1970's when the hall was packed out for this event. We're getting desperately short of members and would love to get some new faces aboard.

The committee now consists of Doug Wightman Chairman and Treasurer, Pat Holland Bookings Secretary, minute keeper, and lots of other things as well, Anne Buchanan, Catherine Ellison, Catriona Forbes, John Kennett, Laura Munro and Jan Wightman, all of whom contribute to our Hall events.

May 7th Barbeque

This was held on the Sunday of the Coronation weekend, and was blessed with surprisingly good weather; we didn't even have to put up the marquee.

May 27th Annual Coffee Morning and Plant Sale

Committee members and locals excelled themselves in producing huge amounts of seedlings and plants of all kinds, and a table full of home-baked produce, the best selection for a few years. Visitors from the local community and beyond supported the event (including the young lady from Kilmany with her lovely giant poodle who comes all the way to Giffordtown to walk in our woods.) The bookstall did better trade than usual, and Catherine's table of various cloths and embroideries, many of them from



Marion Calley's collection, found eager buyers. As ever, we're grateful to Kettle Produce for providing a magnificent collection of fresh vegetables free of charge.



Teas and coffees were accompanied by a selection of scones cakes and biscuits, provided by Jenni from Auchtermuchty Co-op, who not only delivered them but set the tables out for us. Once again we're very grateful to the Co-op and their policy of supporting local communities.

Many thanks to the committee members, other helpers and those who provided plants, baking, embroideries and books, and of course to all those who came along and made this a successful day, raising £450 for Hall funds.

New floor

Well, not really a new floor but a renovation of the old one. The floor has been looking increasingly worn, particularly in the area used by the country dance groups and the monthly coffee mornings. We now have a beautiful smooth, shiny floor, not to say an expensive one, which we hope will last us for many years to come, especially as the numbers of country dancers is down on previous years.

Harry Potter Party

This wasn't a Hall Committee event, but it looked so wonderful I felt we had to mention it. Organised by Stella of Hatters' Catering, for her grandson's birthday, the Hall

was converted for the day into a world of mystery and magic. The photos we have don't do it justice as the curtains had to be opened to let in enough light for the photographs. You really had to be there; the walls were draped with rich velvets, the stage seemed to be transformed into a railway station, sparkling lights everywhere, Harry Potter film clips projected onto the ceiling, a smoke machine adding to the air of mystery, and a long table down the centre of the Hall set for a wizard's banquet with spooky candelabras and terrifying looking cakes and drinks. Stella herself made a magnificent wizard. It was too good to be kept for children!

A Scots Alphabet

More from the gift that keeps on giving, the literary wonder that is Chambers Scots Dialect Dictionary of 1911, edited by the Rev. Alexander Warrack M.A. I sometimes wonder if the Rev made some of these words up, they're so preposterous. The dictionary takes us into the lost world of rural life, the vocabulary of farm labourers, fishermen, children's games (especially marbles), and the earthy language of the village street. There are numerous words to describe fat, skinny, ugly, ungainly, lazy people, mostly, I regret to say, women. I've only dipped my toe into the letter B, but I could fill pages with this letter alone. Here are some prize specimens.

B is for;

Baass: (not a misprint) used of potatoes; hollow in the heart

Babbanqua: a quaking bog

Bachram an adhesive spot of dirt, cow dung used as fuel or left to dry where it fell

Bagenin: rough, and sometimes indecent horseplay at harvest time

Baitie-Bummil: a petty fumbler, an actionless fellow

Baivenjar: a ragamuffin, a tatterdemalion

Ba' money money demanded from a wedding party to buy a football

Bapp-nose: a nose threatening to meet the chin

Bawbee-jo: a lover hired to walk with a girl for a shilling or so

Bejan: to initiate a new shearer in the harvest field by bumping his posteriors on a stone

Bern windin: a kiss given in the corner of a barn

Blawflum: a pompous, empty person, a flattering delusion, a gewgaw, a mere deception.

Lucky Ewe

By Margaret Greig



The sheep which have been grazing the fields at Jacobscroft for the past year are a French Dairy breed which are owned and managed by Lucky Ewe, an organisation which aims to give people with additional support needs of any kind, the chance to experience farming, animal husbandry and food production at a pre-entry level.

Lucky Ewe welcomes people of all abilities and backgrounds and aims to give those on the placements skills and experience to help them progress towards employment.

The outdoors and working with animals has been proven to enhance mental well-being and bring a sense of peace and purpose which Lucky Ewe hopes to achieve for beneficiaries and volunteers. Lucky Ewe offers a path to a new job, volunteering opportunities and beneficial placements for those in need in the community.

Lucky Ewe depends on its volunteers, people who generally want to spend time outdoors, work on the land and help others build up their confidence and skills.

Volunteers usually choose to come along once a week for a session of about 3 hours. Tasks include feeding the sheep, putting up fences and clearing a field of thistles.

Volunteers can also support Lucky Ewe by carrying out more office type jobs for the charity and some are keen

to put themselves forward as charity trustees (Registered Charity SC050034). There is a lot of scope for those who want to make a difference and develop new ways of carrying the charity forward.

They have recently managed to secure permanent premises at NHS Stratheden through community asset transfer which will allow them to increase the flock and in the longer term to produce other food crops such as eggs, honey, hard and soft fruits and vegetables each with its own potential for training and work experience placements.

As one volunteer said “All the while, we are in the fresh air, enjoying the birdsong, the breezes, taking in beautiful views and having a natter. We take time to have a break and talk about what we have learned that day”.

Lucky Ewe actively seeks grants and is always grateful for donations. These help them increase the number of people they can support. They are extremely grateful for any donations, no matter how small.

If you would like to give a donation, please use the following bank account;

Account name: Lucky Ewe

Sort Code; 08-92-99

Account number: 65966215



Island Hopping in the Philippines

By Rachael Brooks



Six months ago running though the Pentlands

This turned out to be almost too literal a title. At the start of the year, I found myself having some time off between two jobs and wanted to make the most of this with a big trip away. My original plan was to go hiking in Nepal, however this was curtailed by what I thought at the time was a relatively minor knee injury. The Philippines seemed like a natural second choice – March is the best month weather wise, there are thousands of islands to explore and I thought that should worst come to worst I could just lie on a beach for a month and read.

Little did I know how much I would need to rely on that latter sentiment! Within a week, I stood up from doing some physio and felt my knee pop. I had already agreed to go out on mopeds with some friends that I had met that day. I didn't want to disappoint and thought that sitting on the back of a bike getting driven around in the

beautiful scenery would be a low impact activity. Unfortunately this did not pan out....the shaking caused my knee to pop out of its socket and I ended that day unable to straighten my leg or put any weight on it.

This marked the start of an alternative adventure in the Philippines, which was made possible by the kindness of everyone I met along the way. I went on a three day



Me and my knee!
island hopping boat trip and snorkelling was one of the

activities offered. There were turtles and manta rays in the water below and I really didn't want to miss out but I was unable to kick to swim – the guide popped a life jacket on me, tied me to him and swam around with me floating behind him with my head in the water like a rag doll! I stayed in a hut by the beach for a week at the end when I really wasn't able to move, the owners took me under their wing and periodically brought me chocolate bars, ice

packs and gave my knee a massage every night. There were also smaller acts of kindness, such as the 700 people who carried my bags for me, and the stranger who handed me part of a branch to use as a crutch. While my time in the Philippines wasn't what I had originally planned, it was an adventure in a totally different sense in that I saw the benefit of allowing myself to rely on other people and be looked after. On return, I had my knee scanned and had to be fast-tracked for surgery with a plethora of issues including a hole in my kneecap. The surgeon commented that he had no idea how I had managed to get around the Philippines with my knee in this state, and I replied that I wouldn't have been able to had it not been for the people I met along the way.



Travelling to the Heart of Darkness.

By Monique Sanders.

Southampton, England

November 1970, 21 years of age, we board the Oriana for the ten day ocean voyage to Cape Town. In the ship's hold, our brand new Ford Cortina; in the vaults of Lowestoft Barclay's Bank, the deeds to John's parents' Lowestoft home as guarantor of the loan to buy it. The Cortina would carry us from Cape Town to the Copperbelt in Zambia, John's first job as a graduate mining engineer, as well as provide us with a vehicle where new ones were scarce.

Funchal, Madeira.

A brief respite from rolling seas on the verdant island of Madeira, a scary - and embarrassing - toboggan ride down the cobbled hillsides streets from the heights to the harbour; our porters look - and were - exhausted.



Cape Town.



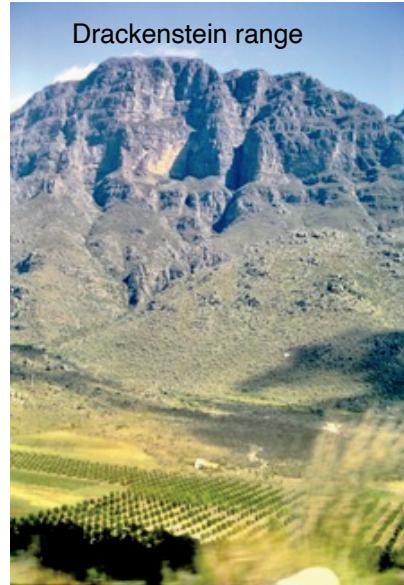
Beautiful views of tabletop mountain as Oriana delicately entered the harbour in the early morning. Busy dockside as British-built steam trains shunted back and forth. Heart-stopping moment as our brand new car (and effectively the in-laws' house) was crane-lifted from the bowels of the ship in a giant hair net, swung aloft, then dropped dockside with a bump. Dire warnings accompanied the stamping of our passports: "Once you cross that Limpopo River....." we would be travelling to the heart of darkness - and would likely never return.

We saw Tabletop Mountain, but we didn't climb it. We'd read about the Garden Route, but we didn't see it. "Got to get going!" said John. We took the main route out of Cape Town to the north, the N1, to the pretty town of Paarl.

Cape Town to Paarl: 37 miles.

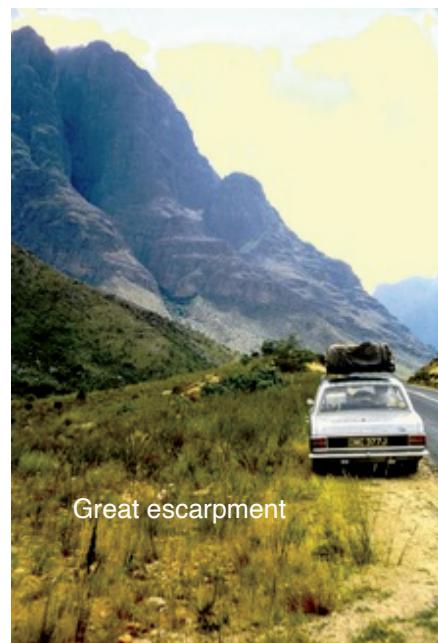
Paarl

The largest town in the Cape Wine-lands nestling in a valley between the dramatic mountains of the Drakenstein Range, where the Afrikaans language was first developed. Here - almost reassuringly in a repressive apartheid regime - we were heckled by a group of young South African men as we sought a hotel for the night.



Paarl to Colesberg via Beaufort West: 415 miles.

Lower and Upper Karoo



Next morning, we rejoined the N1, the main highway from Cape Town to the north which enters the Lower Karoo and follows a course south of the Great Escarpment to Beaufort West. Thereafter, the N1 gradually ascends the Great Escarpment along a broad valley to Three Sisters on the Central Plateau and the Upper Karoo.

The Karoo is a semi-desert natural region of South Africa, an area of low rainfall, arid air, cloudless skies, and extremes of heat and cold.

Were we prepared with bottles of water? I can't remember. I do remember the utter emptiness; occasional rail depots in the distance; twisters spiralling dust and dried vegetation into the air; being glued to our seats with sweat in our air-condition-less British car; Blighty-built steam trains racing besides us across the wilderness. Finally, I remember there was so little traffic, it was an event to pass, or be passed by, another vehicle.



Beaufort West

The largest town in the Great Karoo region, known as its capital.

Colesberg

A small, attractive verdant oasis, thanks to the Karoo's underground water supply and bore holes. All hotels and guesthouses we stayed in were simple and adequate; all had their own bathroom with a shower stall and a bare overhead pipe. A complete dousing from head to toe was very welcome after a hot day's drive; every stitch of clothing washed and dried overnight, ready to put on again the next day.

Colesberg to Johannesburg via Bloemfontein and Welkom: 340 miles.

Bloemfontein

Known as 'the city of roses' after the annual rose festival held there; situated in the middle of the country and referred to as "Central South Africa"; its Sesotho name is Mangaung, meaning "place of cheetahs".

Welkom.

The second-largest city in the Free State province of South Africa, a centre of gold and uranium mining. We

stopped to get supplies (our first encounter with the Afrikaans language in the local department stores) and to visit 'Spider' Webb, a fellow Imperial College mining graduate, after he'd emerged from the 'coal-face' of a gold mine over 2,000 feet below ground. Spider was still scarred from rolling his brand new E-type Jaguar in the Karoo and praying for the safe arrival of a shipment of spare parts from England to fix it.

Johannesburg

A stop with family friends for a few days in Benoni, east of Jo'berg. Bloody Benoni, we called it, after hours trying to find it. The family lived behind eight feet high walls, a guard on duty every night. A house 'girl' did the chores, but wasn't happy about taking on our washing as well. Quite right - I wasn't either! So I took my turn leaning over the bath tub (no washing machine) to wash out our smalls. We were taken to our first drive-in cinema; we were treated to all the local fruits (paw-paw, mangos, lychees, kumquats, avocados) - to mixed reactions; one night, we were taken into Johannesburg, an edgy, unquiet city, to ascend the 883 feet high Hillbrow telecommunication Tower, for 50 years the tallest structure in Africa. The views of the illuminated city were amazing, with something clearly ablaze in the distance.



Pretoria

Taken by our hosts on a day trip to this, the administrative capital of South Africa (Jacobus Johannes Fouché was the president in 1970), to see the Government Union Buildings and Voortrekker Monument. The latter built to commemorate the settlers who left Cape Town between 1835 - 1854 in search of new lands and self-governance.



Government Union Buildings



Voortrekker Monument

Johannesburg to Beit bridge via Louis Trichard and Messina: 335 miles.

Leaving Johannesburg, we saw the vast townships climbing the hills to our right: row upon row of single storey cabins. In apartheid South Africa, all native

workers were obliged to live outside the city and take the daily commute. Domestic servants might live in the grounds of the home where they worked in what was called a 'pikinin kaja', pk for short, a small dwelling, just big enough to sleep in.

There were more traditional settlements, too, called kraals, an Afrikaans word to describe a circular arrangement of mud huts with straw-covered roofs, surrounded by a fence of thorn-bush branches or a palisade. Cattle were kept within the safety of the enclosure.



Kraal

191 miles North of Johannesburg, we drove over the Tropic of Capricorn, 23.5 degrees south of the Equator, at Polokwane.



135 miles later we crossed the Limpopo River at:

Beitbridge

The name of the border town in the province of Matabele Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), as well as the border post and bridge spanning the Limpopo River which forms the political border between South Africa and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Beitbridge to Salisbury, Rhodesia via Bulawayo and Gwelo: 360 miles.

Straight roads, lush green vegetation on either side and cultivated rich farmlands. In 1965, UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) had been declared by Ian Smith; in 1970, independence and the devastation of the Mugabe years still to come. I was thrilled to pass a sign that said Saffron Walden Road, named after the Essex town where both John and I were born. I wondered what former residents of the town ended up here in the African bush.

Salisbury

A sophisticated, attractive city with high-rise buildings and streets lined with purple-flowering jacaranda trees. The Pioneer Column, a military volunteer force of settlers organised by Cecil Rhodes, founded the city on 12 September 1890 as a fort. Now called Harare, it's the most populous city in Zimbabwe.

Salisbury to Chirundu: 215 miles.

Chirundu

The border between Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and Zambia (until independence in October 1964, Northern Rhodesia) is situated in a valley on the banks of the Zambezi River. Doubtless it is much changed from the small chaotic office we found in 1970: airless inside, steamy jungle conditions outside, where beetles the size of saucers ambled about, almost unbearable heat. The Zambian in charge, contemptuous and unwilling to make life easy for us. He scrutinised our paperwork (we didn't dare tell him that he was looking at it upside down), then laboriously wrote out our permissions of entry in pencil, producing - with the aid of at least four sheets of carbon paper - multiple copies. Finally, we were allowed to enter Zambia.

Chirundu to Lusaka: 75 miles.

Lusaka

From Chirundu, the road climbs upwards. Zambian terrain consists mainly of a high-altitude plateau with some hills and mountains, the altitude keeps temperatures bearable. The capital, Lusaka, home then to President Kenneth Kaunda, is located on the plateau in south-central Zambia, with an altitude of 4,200 ft. I don't remember much about our first sighting of the city, but I did notice we weren't the first people to have slept in the sheets on our hotel bed.

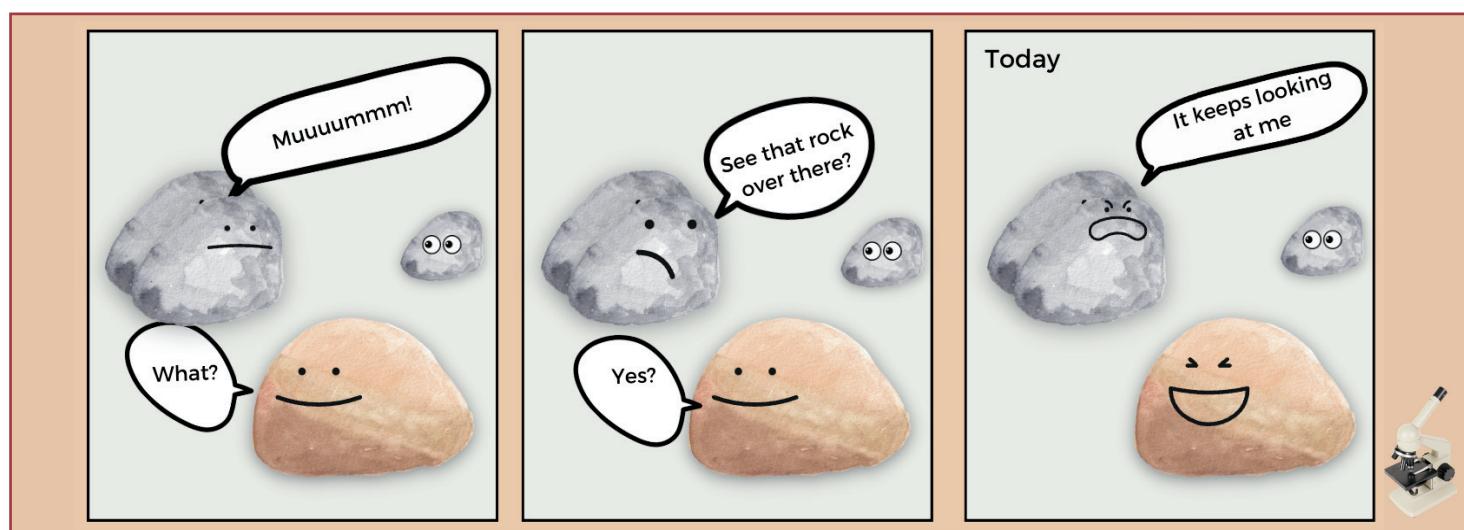
Lusaka to Kalulushi on the Copperbelt via Kabwe and Kitwe: 232 miles.

In places, the rutted laterite road was almost washed out due effects of the rainy season from mid-November to April. In the dry season (mid -August to November), vehicles would instead throw up clouds of red dust that reached into every nook and cranny. The land was noticeably less cultivated than in Rhodesia.

Kalulushi

After a journey of 2,052 miles, we arrived in Kalulushi, established in 1953 as a company town for workers at the nearby Chibuluma copper and cobalt mine. It's situated 9 miles west of Kitwe and close to the Congo border. Because the expatriate mine houses were concentrated in one area, with vast areas of 'township' houses elsewhere, it felt like a village. A two-bedroomed brick-built bungalow was to be our home for the next two and a half years, with an enormous garden stocked with bougainvillea, poinsettias, two avocado trees, a lemon tree, a mango tree, a kumquat tree and two banana plants.

After that, for my next trip? In 1973, flights to war-torn Beirut via Salisbury, Cape Town and Cairo to meet my parents, and then the 2485 miles drive back to England. But that's another story.



Summer 2023 19

Local walks - Maspie Den



Walk about 1hr. On a dry day, ordinary walking shoes are fine, but it can get a bit muddy, especially at the top, so plan accordingly. One webpage tells you that this place is remote, and you should be sure to carry water and a mobile phone!

The Maspie Den must surely be one of the finest walks in Scotland, let alone Fife. Admittedly it has none of the grandeur of the mountains, or the attractions of the coast, but on a beautiful day in May, when these photos were taken, it was quite breath-taking. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Maspie Den, it's a deep gorge, following the Maspie Burn as it runs off Falkland Hill, down to Falkland itself. There are wooden bridges, waterfalls, staircases, and a tunnel.

All this was thanks to the efforts of Onesiphorus Tyndall Bruce, who began life without the Bruce bit, but on marrying Margaret Stuart Hamilton in 1828, he added 'Bruce' by Royal licence, as you do. I once read that he was given his unusual moniker by his parents, who wanted him to have a name that occurs only once in the Bible, but I can't confirm that as I'm still stuck on the Book of Genesis and it hasn't cropped up yet. He was a barrister by profession, coming from Bristol, educated at Eton and Christ Church Oxford. His family founded the first bank in Bristol in 1750 and their wealth came from merchant activities and slave trading. I hope the base of his statue in Falkland is well fixed down—statues of slave traders from Bristol have come to an ignominious end before now. He was the Laird of Falkland from 1828 until his death in 1855 during which time he built the

present House of Falkland, and created the walk as we know it today. Inevitably it fell into disuse and disrepair, as the House was used for various purposes over the years including an army convalescent home in the first war, and a home for Polish military in the second. I can't believe that the den had been forgotten about completely, but it was in the 1970's when Tim Foxall, one of the teachers at the school for wayward boys as it was then, set about clearing a path and building bridges to render it accessible to visitors. About twenty years ago further improvements were undertaken by the Army, rendering it safer and making access easier. It's now maintained by Falkland Estate.



There are several ways of approaching the walk, but it's simplest to start from the car park at the Stables. To get there, assuming you're driving, come through Falkland, passing the fountain in the High Street and carrying straight on until you come to a turn off to the right, along the West Port. Continue through the gates, past the duck pond, which sadly never seems to have any ducks in it these days, and the Stables car park is on your right. Take some coins to put in the honesty box here to help maintain the den. There is a café here where drinks and snacks are available. Continue on foot for about 400yds until you see a large stone with Maspie Den carved on it. Turn up the path and carry on to the top! No further directions required.

After a pleasant open woodland area, you pass under a bridge and the den proper starts. You are in a deep gorge, with banks of enormous trees on its steep sides, pines,

oak, beech, birch. Next you pass through the tunnel, a cunning piece of engineering. It's built on a curve, and just at the moment it becomes pitch dark, and you start to worry, you see the light at the far end.



Across bridges, up staircases, past a small waterfall, you reach the top of the walk and the waterfall known as the Yad.

Here an immense limestone slab thrusts out and the waterfall cascades over its edge into a delightful pool. Now you can walk behind the waterfall and up the path on the other side, and here you join the wide track which takes you back down to the Stables. In the late summer you can feast on the wild raspberries which grow in abundance.



When you climb up from the den onto the track, you used to be able to cross the track and cross the field to

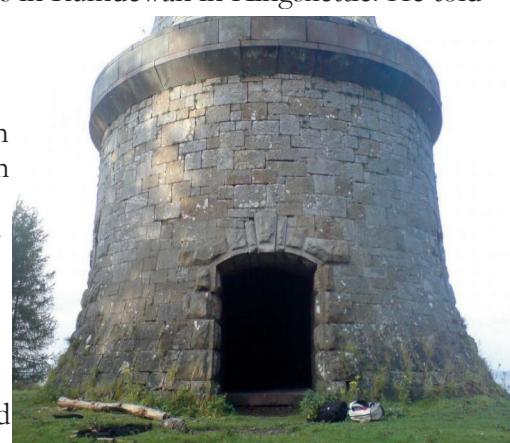
the Temple of Decision, a sort of folly, built in 1849, and modelled on the temple of Theseus in Athens. It was described as a summerhouse and observatory, and was designed to be seen from the big house. When I first



came here in the 70's you could still see the main features of the building, and to the best of my recollection, there were remains of mosaics inside, blue, with stars. Alas, the building is now completely ruinous, and totally unrecognisable from the building in the photograph. The steps are a complete mystery; I have no recollection of these.

Further around the hillside is the prominent local landmark, the Onesiphorus Tyndall Bruce Monument. I confess I haven't been up to 'the Monument', as it was always known in Strathmiglo since I went with my father 70 years ago, but it's on my bucket list. The monument was of course raised by his wife in tribute to the great man.

Some readers may remember Jock Kenny who had a garage business in Rumdewan in Kingskettle. He told me that when he was young, he, Jimmy Shand, and Jim Crawford from Edentown were all motor cycle enthusiasts, and used to head up to the monument and ride around



inside it like a Wall of Death. Can this possibly be true? You'd have to be pretty quick off the mark to get enough height to avoid an early and painful exit through the door. Don't try this at home kids.....

e-Bike Special

By Neil Brooks

As reported in the various G&DCC minutes and this Gazette, two e-bikes have been purchased for use by residents and their friends and family. I thought an evaluation report would remind everyone how they can access this fabulous community resource.

Who can use them?

Any resident of the community can reserve one or both of the bikes. They are the 'responsible person'. This is ideal for use by friends or family.

How long do I get them?

It's anywhere from an hour all the way up to two weeks.

Does it cost?

There is no charge, no matter how long you use them, as long as you bring them back with a full charge. If you don't have time to do this, there is a small charge of 50p per battery level from maximum. There is also no deposit.

How and where do I get them?

Email, text, WhatsApp, call me on 07938828589 giffordtownsecretary@gmail.com to reserve them. On the day, you come along and pick them up. After you're finished, you bring them back.

What about insurance and liability?

As the responsible person, you are in fact responsible for anything that happens to the bike while it's out on loan. There is a loan agreement to sign which states that you pay for any damage or breakages (normal wear and tear and scuffs or scrapes don't count), or for any third party claim caused by accidents etc. It sounds ominous, but it's just the same as if the bike were yours.

How useable are they?

They are step through, which makes getting on and off a bit easier. They do fold up for transport, but like all e-bikes they are quite heavy (27kg). The fat tyres make them ideal for roads or light trails. You can take them with you when you go on holiday, or away for the day.

Will they run away out of control?

There are six power levels. 0 means it's just like a normal push bike. 1-5 gives increase levels of pedal assistance. No pedalling means you won't move.

22 Summer 2023

How much notice is needed for borrowing them?

There is a booking system that operates up to 6 months in advance. You can only book one slot at a time though, so you could not book every Monday morning in advance for example. You can even be spontaneous and turn up on spec. If I'm in and they are not reserved you can go away with them, but best to book if you have a plan in mind.

Will they fit me?

Even at it's lowest the seat might be higher than other bikes. At school we were taught that both feet should be on the ground and your bum on the seat. But these seem much more Continental in style in that you stand on the ground while stationary without sitting down. Then to mount, you stand on a pedal to get the bike going and only then sit on the seat. Same for the dismount - you use a pedal to step down to the ground. It's different but I found I quickly changed the habits of a lifetime.

Why did we get them ?

To enable residents to try an e-bike without the cost of hiring or buying. For physical fitness - you still need to pedal and work at it. For mental wellbeing - being able to get out into the countryside and go further or faster on an easy to use step through bike means that you can enjoy this aspect of life again that is not possible on a normal bike.

We were lucky to receive a great discount from the supplier, Burhan Malik of Hygge Bikes in London. We also received generous donations from Howe of Fife Rotary and Rock Solid which made this scheme possible.

Pictured handing over the 'white' e-bike, left to right is, Neil Brooks - Community Council. Libby Elliot - Howe of Fife Rotary. Gary Holt & Wendy Alexander - Lib Dem Party and Andrew Kennedy - Howe of Fife Rotary.



Pictured handing over the 'black' e-bike, left to right is; David Ellis - Rock Solid and Neil Brooks - Community Council.



Lake District Adventures

Lesley and I go to the Lake District for a week every May. In the past, we have hired e-bikes and found them great to use in the hilly countryside there. But there is always the hassle of booking a hire and then going to get it. Plus, it's not cheap.

So we took the two community e-bikes with us this time. The first challenge was to get them in the boot. I have mentioned they are heavy and getting one in was no problem, but fitting two in together needed a bit of thinking. They do fold up but there is no clip to keep them folded, so I velcro tied the wheels together. This proved to be a mistake as I found it's easier to let the tyres roll once you get the bike up. I also discovered there is a loop on the bike which makes them easier to lift



The very first time we used them was up a steep hill and we found that the pedals need to go round a few times before the assistance kicks in. We also discovered there is a useful 'walk along' feature. A long press of the minus button means the bike will move at 6km/hr. That's maybe too fast for normal walking, but it was useful when moving them around short distances on steep ground - and later when we bit off a hill that was just too steep.

We were lucky with the weather this time and having the bikes available meant we could be flexible with our plans

and not have to be rigid if the mood led us to doing something else.

On our first outing we were out for most of the day 10am - 4pm and covered 24km and used about 3 out of the six battery levels. This involved many stops to stock up on tea, cake and even a beer at lunch time. The hills were a breeze and initially I had the power setting at about 1 or 2. Then I realised that there was no point in huffing and puffing up a hill when I could pop it up to 3 or 4. You really do feel the boost to the effort put in and it does make it a joy to cycle and a great way to see the sights.

The second time was more of an impromptu decision about 5pm to go up to a local landmark of leaning stones at Castelrigg. This time, I was right up to level 5.



We were definitely the source of much curiosity as the look of the bikes is very different from the majority of other bikes. A few folks even came up to speak to us about them and were astounded when they heard they were part of a community loan scheme.

The final outing was also planned for an all day adventure. For those interested, it started off from our lodge - it was great not to have to go into town and find parking and then collect the bikes. Along with the worry about being back on time before the shop closed. We flew down into Keswick and continued along Newlands Valley from Braithwaite to Buttermere, up and over Honister Pass and back via Grange to Portinscale and then back to Keswick. Among the many scenic routes in the Lake District, this particular one keeps us coming back time after time. It is steep though and while the bikes felt secure going downhill very fast - I reached a maximum speed of 44.8km/hr - I started to apply the brakes just to be on the safe side. Honister Pass is well known for its Slate Mine, and for being very steep at a

gradient of 25%. This actually proved too much for the bikes as the motor is 250w. The ones we had hired in the past were 500w. This meant for a small section, we had to walk alongside them. However, this is where the walk along feature proved very useful as we didn't have to push the bikes up the hill. However, there were plenty more steep hills that were easily coped with and I became used to using power level 4 or 5. Was this a mistake?

Possibly, as about 35km into the journey, my bike suddenly cut out. Anyone who has ever used an e-bike before will know that if you opt to reduce the level of assistance, it can feel like you're suddenly cycling through thick treacle or towing a house behind you. Lesley, on the other hand, still had three levels of battery left. We concluded, sadly, that the difference therefore had to be something to do with the fact I am considerably heavier than Lesley. Not fat! Oh no! Muscles and bones.

Those muscles were put into considerable use pedalling the bike the remaining 5km back to our lodge, which of course was inevitably up a steep hill. Not the whole 5km of course. On the flat, the bike is a joy to ride without the need for any assistance, but being heavier in construction, it is harder to pedal than a normal bike if there is an incline.

Conclusion

The bikes performed better than expected considering the huge demand put on them by the hills around the Lakes. We also found the lights were a bonus as our evening excursion was not finished until it was dusk. The panniers proved very useful for jumpers, water and the various bits and bobs that are handy to keep with you. Even the phone holder was unexpectedly useful as we were on a route that we had not been before and having the map up on the phone was really useful. It's worth bearing in mind it can be handy to have two people to lift them into a vehicle. And the battery capacity very much depends on how much you use it. Running out of battery also means no horn, a problem as there are so many walkers around. All in all it made the holiday even better than normal.

Hello, Helen here!

We had a wonderful bike ride today, past Crawford Priory and up to the Cults! The bikes were absolutely amazing on all of the hills, they were very quick to get a hang of and the phone holder and bag on the back were put to good use! Thank you for letting us borrow them and we would be delighted if we may use them again in the future! Thank you.

24 Summer 2023



Rachael



Following knee surgery, (see article entitled, 'Island Hopping in the Philippines') I found I was unable to do almost any exercise, let alone cycle as much as I would like as it was painful to put weight through my knee when I reached any hills. The e-bikes were great to allow me to get out and explore, but also to allow me to rehabilitate in a way that would not cause me any further injury.

From Giffordtown, I went all the way through Collessie, Letham, the Bow of Fife and Ladybank and was able to manage all of the surfaces (marking the first time I was able to get up a hill all year) which was a distance of 17km in total. I was quite pleased with myself and it had given me the confidence to go further in future - but not have the worry that I will be overdoing it.

I especially enjoyed that I could adjust the level of assistance that the E-bike provided - as my recovery progresses I will be able to decrease my reliance on the electric aspect and build some strength back up. I would really recommend these to anyone looking to build up their fitness, recover from any injuries or just have a really fun day out!

Cycling with a Zoom

By Graham and Anne Buchanan



On a warm sunny day at the beginning of June, Anne and I picked up the new Hamlets community e-bikes from Neil for our first shot of riding one. We decided to travel to the cafe at Backhouse estate for lunch.

Anne was apprehensive about riding a powered bike but riding an electric bike turned out to be an exhilarating experience that seamlessly blends the joys of cycling with the convenience of electric power. As we embarked on this electrifying adventure, the experience of riding an electric bike and discovering the unique sensations, freedom, and pure enjoyment it brings was an eye opener.

From the moment we pushed the pedals, we were greeted with an instant surge of power that propels you forward with grace and ease. The electric motor seamlessly integrates with your pedaling, providing a boost that transforms even the most challenging inclines into conquerable feats. Feeling the wind in our hair as we effortlessly cruised at speeds that surpass traditional

bicycles. We would say riding an electric bike, you'll discover a newfound sense of freedom and liberation on every ride.

The engineering marvels behind electric bikes ensure a smooth and comfortable ride. The integration of advanced suspension systems and responsive braking mechanisms guarantees enhanced stability and control, even on rough terrains or bumpy surfaces. The electric motor's smooth power delivery and the smooth shifting of gears allow for a seamless transition between different speeds, resulting in a ride that feels both dynamic and refined.

With various assist levels, you can choose how much electric assistance you desire. Whether you prefer a gentle boost or a more exhilarating ride, the electric bikes provide the flexibility to adapt to your needs. We noticed one of the remarkable aspects of electric bikes is their near-silent operation. As you glide along the road, the absence of engine noise allows you to connect more intimately with your surroundings. Moreover, the eco-conscious nature of electric bikes brings a sense of satisfaction, knowing that you're minimizing your carbon footprint and contributing to a greener future. With each pedal stroke, you're actively embracing sustainable transportation without sacrificing performance or enjoyment.

We would say electric bikes offer a gateway to exciting new adventures and exploration. They enable you to cover greater distances effortlessly, unveiling hidden gems and breathtaking scenery that would have otherwise remained inaccessible. Whether you're traversing urban landscapes, scenic trails, or coastal paths, these electric bikes will expand your horizons, encouraging you to embark on journeys that are both invigorating and awe-inspiring or as we did a gentle stroll to a spot of lunch.

Riding an electric bike is a transformative experience that transcends traditional cycling. It combines the thrill of speed, the joy of effortless pedaling, and the freedom to explore. From the moment we embarked on an electric bike, we were captivated by their smooth power, customizable features, and eco-friendly nature. Electric bikes empower riders to reimagine their riding adventures, and embrace an active and sustainable lifestyle. So, book a shot on your community electric bike and let the journey unfold, as you discover the pure delight and sheer exhilaration that awaits.

The Book Group

by David Maillie

The Waiting by Regi Claire

March 2023



A title around a Christmas wreath, in which the first candle is Prophecy, the last one is the “waiting”.

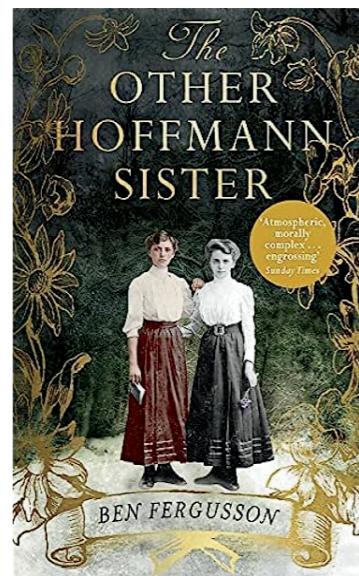
The story about two school friends Elizabeth McLean/ Lizzie/Mrs Fairbairn and Marlene told to us by Lizzie, a dog-loving lady living with her memories which are disturbed when a youthful visitor, Rachel, from Switzerland, with links to her past invades her life.

A guide to those in advancing years is that it's good to mix with younger folk to keep yourself young. That's OK if and when it suits but there are times when the brash breeziness is more than is wanted or needed. Peace and quiet. The timescale moves from school age through to widowhood. We are introduced to our narrator when she answers a telephone call so many of us have had “Hello is this Mrs....?” and replies that she doesn't want a new kitchen – I took to her immediately. She is a staid widow lady who feeds her current dog, (their names help guide us through the times), a totally unsuitable dog diet of chocolate and other goodies, but they keep one another company which is the main thing. The tale opens with that phone call to which most of us would react by putting the phone down. But she admits that she is Mrs Fairbairn and Rachel's entry triggers the recall of Lizzie's life with Marlene and of Marlene's story. It has been an interesting life made more exciting by her association from schooldays with Marlene Gray who is definitely in the dangerous to know category – her of the non-stop I-don't- give-a-damn attitude and her blue eyes. Somehow, despite Marlene's influence, Elizabeth/Lizzie is guided by her mother into a life of token respectability, employee dressmaker in ladies clothes and later hairdressing. These efforts are spoiled either by herself

or by Marlene's influence. Both girls do marry but the outcomes are tragically different and Lizzie has to fight against her husband who, not surprisingly, disapproves of Marlene, her way of life and the fact that every time she is in trouble, which is often, she turns to Lizzie. Marlene's troubles lead to drink, linked with aspirations to the high life. All in all I enjoyed this book. Some of it told of mischief which should have produced reproach but which actually produced a suppressed laugh. Some of it was sad but I wished Lizzie hadn't killed her dogs off by their diet. She was a kind soul taken a loan of by the world around her in contrast to her friend Marlene. Everyone warned her against Marlene but without her the book wouldn't exist.

The Other Hoffmann Sister by Ben Ferguson

April 2023



Another story with an historical background but which may be a sort of mystery if not a thriller. One mystery is why the years of the First World War were skipped, as if nothing had happened. It opens in 1902 in what we now know as Namibia when it was German South West Africa. Our main characters, the Hoffmann family, refer to it as South West throughout the book although the story itself

leaves the area quickly, returning to Germany and doesn't return although it, the South West, is mentioned time and again.

The Hoffmann family have been taken to Africa by their ambitious, status seeking husband and father, Johannes. He claims that everything he does is for the family's good including his business dealings, of which there appear to be many. He has bought his farm from his new neighbour, Baron von Ketz who conveniently happens to have a son of marriageable age, an attraction for the status seeking, Herr Hoffmann. The Baron is a coarse individual with compete disregard for his native workers and cannot understand his new neighbour's considerate treatment of his own workers.

The Baron has given the Hoffmanns two mixed race

workers, half German, half Herero. The boy, Hans Ziegler, is multilingual and teaches Ingrid, the younger sister and accompanies Margarete, the older other sister, aged 13, on daily visits to the Baron's farm. The girl Norah helps Frau Hoffmann in the farm buildings. A local uprising by the Hereros, burning of buildings, killing of the Baron, cause the German population to flee and eventually return to Germany about 1906. They think that Hans and Norah will meet up with them but this does not happen.

Margarete marries Emil, who has inherited the title of Baron and the dilapidated family estate in Germany after his father's death, so giving Herr Hoffmann the entry to the aristocracy that he wanted.

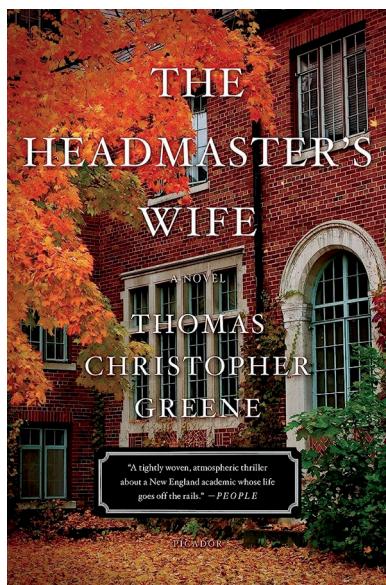
This happiness is somewhat tarnished as Margarete disappears on her wedding night and is assumed to have drowned by accident in a nearby lake.

Ingrid has benefitted from Hans' teaching and is working as a translator for the government and also translating poetry from English and French. This leads her into the company of political groups bent on revolution in the German state. Many real life people crop up and the history of the times is overlaid with the narrative, or maybe the narrative is overlaid with history. Ingrid has never accepted the story of Margarete's disappearance and beavers away finding and meeting anyone who can help her untangle her puzzle.

The mystery becomes very complicated. There are many characters who pop in and out and none of them seem to be telling the truth. There are many twists and turns but what does emerge is the strange behaviour of the Hoffmann parents. Cruel, beyond reason – that is the mystery. And history tells us that Germany then got rid of its aristocracy so sought after and gained, if for a short time, by Herr Hoffmann.

The Headmaster's Wife by T. C. Greene

May 2023



I was only a little way into this book when the first reaction kicked in and it wasn't a good one. It was a feeling of repulsion but maybe it should have been sympathy for our headmaster. So, as has been my way with books I ploughed on because most times somewhere the ending justifies what has gone before even if it has been a long tedious struggle.

I'm not sure if he was a man of whom too much was expected or who had too high expectations of his place in life or, as he says of himself "I was a sad needy puppy". Arthur Winthrop is Headmaster of an elite boarding school, Lancaster, Vermont as was his father before him. His Board of Trustees suggest that he returns to face to face class teaching as it appears from the story that Arthur is drinking more than is good for him. He appears in the opening pages in a dreamlike condition on a snowy winter's day in Central Park, New York, decides to undress and go for a walk, stark naked. Although he tells the officers of NYPD that being naked is not a crime in Vermont they tell him that in Central Park it is. And so Arthur's story as he remembers it starts to unfold and his life to unravel. He recounts noticing this student he hadn't been aware of before and manipulates things so that she travels with him to an alumni meeting in Boston where he drinks too much and has to stay over in Boston with her - Betsy Pappas. So occurs the first infidelity and teacher/student misdemeanour. It also lead to my reaction above – sign of getting older?

This first part is sub headed:

Acrimony

which comes from Betsy being attracted to another student Russell Hurley to the annoyance of Arthur who uses his position to get Russell expelled under false pretences.

Expectations

where their son Ethan has defied his parents' plans for his future, in academia or similar, and joined the army with predictable results in Iraq. His room is now Elizabeth's/Betsy's shrine much to Arthur's distress. How have they drifted apart? Earlier episodes are repeated told from a different point of view and the characters have changed in that they are a generation apart. Wife Elizabeth who has been a moderating influence on Arthur's drinking and behaviour in his headmaster role drifts away. She starts playing tennis with other wives and this becomes an obsession and eventually finishes in the coach's bed. She attempts suicide, repeat episode, but, despite inability to swim manages to get herself out of water. Confused so far?, me too, but I enjoyed it although it was a relief to get to the third part"

After

where a quick finish off was done. A happy ending for those who like one but a bit convenient. I wondered how far away the fictional Lancaster might have been from New York for would-be District Attorneys.

The Hermit's Hoard

The Romance that Never Was and How Not to Forge a Will

By Sylvia Brown

The death in 1900 and vast wealth of George Johnston of Lathrisk and Rossie had the whole county of Fife and beyond buzzing with speculation as to who would inherit and how much.

He was known to be worth a fortune, possibly a millionaire, but definitely the richest man in Fife. A recluse who had never married with no issue. George was the 3rd Johnston to own Lathrisk.



David Johnston 1st of Lathrisk

According to family members, David Johnston, as a young man had been employed in transporting mail around Fife. He supplemented his meagre income with a bit of smuggling which was considered fair game due to the high taxes on certain commodities such as tea and whisky. It was said that David had got into a fight when he was caught with contraband. He lashed out and his blows may have resulted in the death of an Exciseman. It was expedient for him to vanish in short order

After going first to the East India Company, he settled in the port of Gothenburg, Sweden, where he had relatives, and became a merchant exporting timber. If he retained any notions of keeping his hand in at smuggling, he was in the right place at the right time. We have no proof that he did, other than circumstantial – previous experience – and that he built up a substantial fortune very quickly.

Derek Janes (Tea Smuggling in the North Sea 1750-1800) wrote:

What is clear is that Gothenburg, the source of the best quality contraband tea was well placed geographically and in terms of connections with Scotland, with its cadre of Scottish merchants. The fact that many of the Scots were also Jacobite exiles would certainly indicate that they would be accustomed to working 'under the radar' and would not be unduly disappointed at depriving the British government of tax income. It is notable, however, that these merchants, these suppliers of contraband, were largely leading citizens of Gothenburg and their association with this trade evidently did no harm to their reputations there.

David Johnston married a Scottish woman named Mary Robertson in 1771. All of their children but one were born in Gothenburg and they are listed in Kettle church records as such. The youngest, Elizabeth, was born in 1784 at Lathrisk, Kettle Parish, the year after David had bought it.



Lathrisk House

Johnston of Lathrisk No. 2 was William, father of George The Recluse. He became heir in 1809 on the death of his father. He inherited Lathrisk and Weddersbie, in Fife, and Bavelaw in Midlothian. To these William Johnston added the lands of Kilwhiss, Rossie, Urquhart, Largo, Lumquhat Mill, all in Fife, and Monzie, in Perthshire. William did not mingle much with the county gentry and had a reputation for being unsociable and rather eccentric.



Rossie House

He was left a widower when George was only a year old. Father and son had a volatile relationship. There was a prevalent tale that George sewed his father into a rug while both were the worse for drink and left him trussed up overnight. George left Fife and travelled far and wide, probably with the financial assistance of his father. He had been living in Paris for some time and only returned to live permanently in Fife in 1868 after William died. He moved into Lathrisk House and took over the running of the estates he had inherited.

In a similar way to his father, although more extremely so, George limited his social contacts, showing no interest in becoming involved in local affairs or with humanity in general, except those absolutely necessary to take care of his home, finances, and properties. Typically, he employed 3 female servants and one male servant in the house, as well as an array of estate workers.

A few days after he took up residence, George was visited by an old friend, John Grant, a pig-dealer from Freuchie. They had run around together in their youth. The former friend found him greatly changed and rather morose. The talk turned to wills, and George said he would never make a will as there would be plenty of people to look after what was left behind. With that he handed John Grant a glass of whisky telling him to drink it all and never come back.

Many strange and sensational stories circulated. What curious people didn't know they made up. Some said he only went out at night. He was a miser. It was also said his father once quarrelled with his banker in Cupar, and without warning withdrew £40,000 in gold, putting the bank's future in jeopardy. This vast sum was supposedly hidden in an oak chest, which was only discovered after George's death when the executors went into his home to search for a will! Most of the tales are demonstrably false. The inventory of George The Recluse's movable estate runs to 19 pages. Largo House and Monzie Castle were rented out part-furnished.



Largo House

He received rents from many properties including houses in Edentown. Cash in the house was £633 and it was not found in an oak chest. The heritable estate was over 10,000 acres in Fife, and 4,000 in Perthshire. This excludes the estate of Bavelaw in Midlothian.



Moonzie Castle, Crieff, Perthshire

Soon 35 members of the Maitland family and others were staking their claims. The Maitlands & Maitland-Makgills of Rankeillor, Collessie Parish, had been related by marriage to the Johnsons since George The Recluse's aunt Mary Johnston married Charles Maitland Makgill at Kettle in 1794.

Another claimant who threw his hat into the ring was Mr John Douglas of Salford, Manchester. His father, the late Sholto Douglas was a maternal uncle of the deceased. His family had been prevented from visiting at Lathrisk when George was alive, consistent with the treatment of the erstwhile friend John Grant of Freuchie. The Douglas's were not informed of George's death nor invited to the funeral. John Douglas wrote to the Scottish Office to request that the body which was in Falkland churchyard be exhumed.

His justification was "*There are not six people in all Scotland who will stand and testify that they have met, far less conversed, with Johnston... The whole affair has become national property and public talk in Scotland. I believe that nothing less than a full and exhaustive inquiry will now satisfy the public mind.*"

The newspapers were already buzzing with speculation at the entire matter at home and abroad. Imagine the further sensation when a will came to light! It was purported to have been written in 1869 and was found sewn into the lining of a lady's dress. It left a major



legacy to "Miss Ann Preston, whom I dearly love". If she did not survive to inherit then it would go to her nearest family members. She had died 25 years previously. Her niece then received the dress. She too had died 3 years before, and when someone had recently torn it apart to either dispose of it or recycle the fabric, the will magically appeared. The Recluse was suddenly seen with compassion and his solitary nature romanticised as clearly due to a broken heart and lost love.

The will was duly examined and quickly found to be a forgery! It had been presented as genuine by one John Pithie, an insurance agent, age 30, of Dundee, who was very soon arrested but not before the story had gone out as genuine to the world, even appearing in Australian newspapers.

Pithie was a bungling amateur. Of course the huge legacy promised to Ann Preston would have gone to him and his family. He made several mistakes. First he wrote it out in his own handwriting. Second it was found to be on paper that was not more than two years old, recognisable by the manufacturer's water-mark, even although attempts had been made to make it look old by wetting and drying the paper, and adding some suitable soiling. He had convinced his father that it was genuine and used him to courier it to the acting solicitors.

The case went to the Supreme Court in Edinburgh. Pithie appeared very pale and anxious as he pled guilty. A first offender, Sunday School teacher, military volunteer and widower with a two-year old son, there was a lot of pity for him. But justice had to be seen to be done. John Pithie was sent to prison for 18 months in Edinburgh from 7th February 1902 bringing upon himself and his family crushing shame that would follow him for life. Collating the many claims must have been a brain-addling genealogical challenge. The new heir of Lathrisk was soon declared as Lieutenant Charles Julian Maitland Makgill-Crichton of Rankeillor, by virtue of senior descent in the female line from Mary Johnston, aunt of The Recluse who married Charles Maitland of Rankeillor in 1794.

Charles, was still only twenty when he had to leave his regiment in Cairo to become the next Laird of Lathrisk. His father was the famous David Maitland Makgill

Crichton who worked tirelessly in the establishment of the Free Church in Scotland and was heavily involved in the running of Giffordtown Free Church.

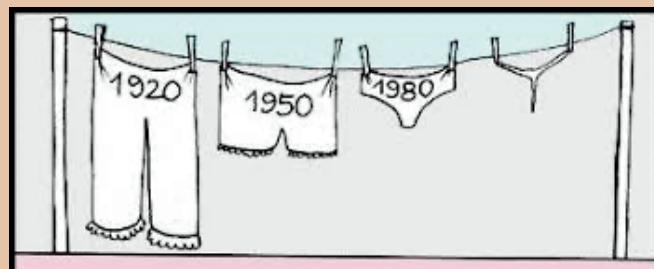
**Charles J Maitland
Makgill Crichton**



In stark contrast to George's self-imposed seclusion, the estate of Lathrisk was thrown wide open with a celebratory ball on the occasion of Charles's 21st birthday in September 1901 for 200 county nobility and gentry of Fife. Other celebrations included a dinner dance and garden party for the tenancy

Sadly he was killed in action in the First World War at Loos in 1915 "a hero at the head of his battalion."

There are many unknowns around the three generations of the Johnston family of Lathrisk. A recent conversation with a trusted source told of discovered documents relating to shady dealings of George the Recluse. It is entirely possible that defrauding the government was generational. But that is pure speculation!



**Cows lose their jobs
as milk prices drop**

Getting Into Shape

By Neil Brooks

I look back on the variety of jobs I have done over the years and it seems I return to some kind of caring work. I think this started 23 years ago when my first wife died from a brain tumour. I wanted to be able to help and support others going through these very difficult times, so I trained to be a Complementary Therapist. My main treatments were Reflexology, Massage and CranioSacral Therapy. I also completed a course in Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) which was handy as I found most of my clients liked to talk. I was amazed at how successful some of these treatments could be for some long standing ailments. On reflection, it could well have been the fact that they were receiving the attention of another human being for around an hour which was just as helpful, if not more, than anything I was actually doing to them. After a while, I became discouraged with the therapy side of things as it just did not seem possible to help everyone. Then life moved on and I morphed into others fields of interest and employment but there was still a candle burning for wanting to help others.

Skipping forward a number of years, a colleague of mine, Robert, went from being a high flying sales director to someone who lost everything to alcohol, job, family, home, car, self-respect and at one point was seriously considering was it worth waking up. However, one morning, there was a change and he started to study psychology. He now has a thriving Counselling and Psychotherapy practice. Determined to give back and do something to address the increasing problems of mental health, he asked me if I could help him develop a course to do with mental health and wellbeing.

This saw the creation of a new company called Shape Wellbeing. Robert supplies the technical expertise to do with the psychotherapy side and I provided the technical expertise to do with websites and setting up a program that could be delivered to the public.

The concept of Shape came about because we can all feel a little 'out of shape' mentally at times. Our 'shape' is constantly changing and is the result of internal and external forces. The workshops we offer are based on established psychotherapy concepts such as CBT, Psychodynamics and Humanistic approaches, but they take a more simplistic approach and don't use technical terms or theory. The idea is that by making people aware of some simple tools, techniques or strategies, they can be in a better position to deal with their own challenges. The workshops are not designed to replace 1-1



SHAPE
wellbeing

counselling, but for those people who are open to looking at new ways of doing things. Here is some feedback we received from the first session of our three part Self-Care Workshop:

"In conclusion, the workshop was a transformative experience that empowered me to work on my shape in order to create greater wellbeing for my self and hopefully in the future for others."

This kind of course is not for everyone and some people need to see a trained counsellor, but if you're interested in finding out more, I would gladly take the time to share with you what we do and how we do it.

In brief though, we have a Four Step Process which we recommend: Listen, Follow the Feeling, Reflect and Empower. This process is underpinned by our 7 Key Principles of Empathy, Compassion, Acceptance, Non-Judgement, Open & Honest, Genuine & Real, Empowerment.

If there was one tip I could give, which we find universally helpful to all attendees on our workshops, it is that we should all listen more. We did have one person say that his wife claimed he never listens. He justified himself to say that he was listening so hard to his wife that he was able to think up solutions to her problems as she was talking. If you can't see the problem there, then you need to come on one of our workshops. If you can see the problem there, then still come on one of our workshops! We keep the workshops fun and light and aim to have people leave with something tangible they can do after each session. You can find our more details on www.shapewellbeing.com

I was becoming increasingly interested in the theory that underpins the work that we were doing and was keen to be able to do more and go deeper. I started to do some research on counselling courses and finally opted to sign up for the Post Graduate Master in Counselling at Abertay University. This course is what is termed Pluralistic, which means that the Counsellor will work with the client to arrive at the best solution that will help them. This contrasts say with a solely Psychodynamic approach, or solely CBT approach. The course begins in September and takes three years. Offering counselling can be done at any age and hopefully it is something that I can continue to do for a decade or two. In any case, I reckon that if I prevent one suicide, it will be worth it.

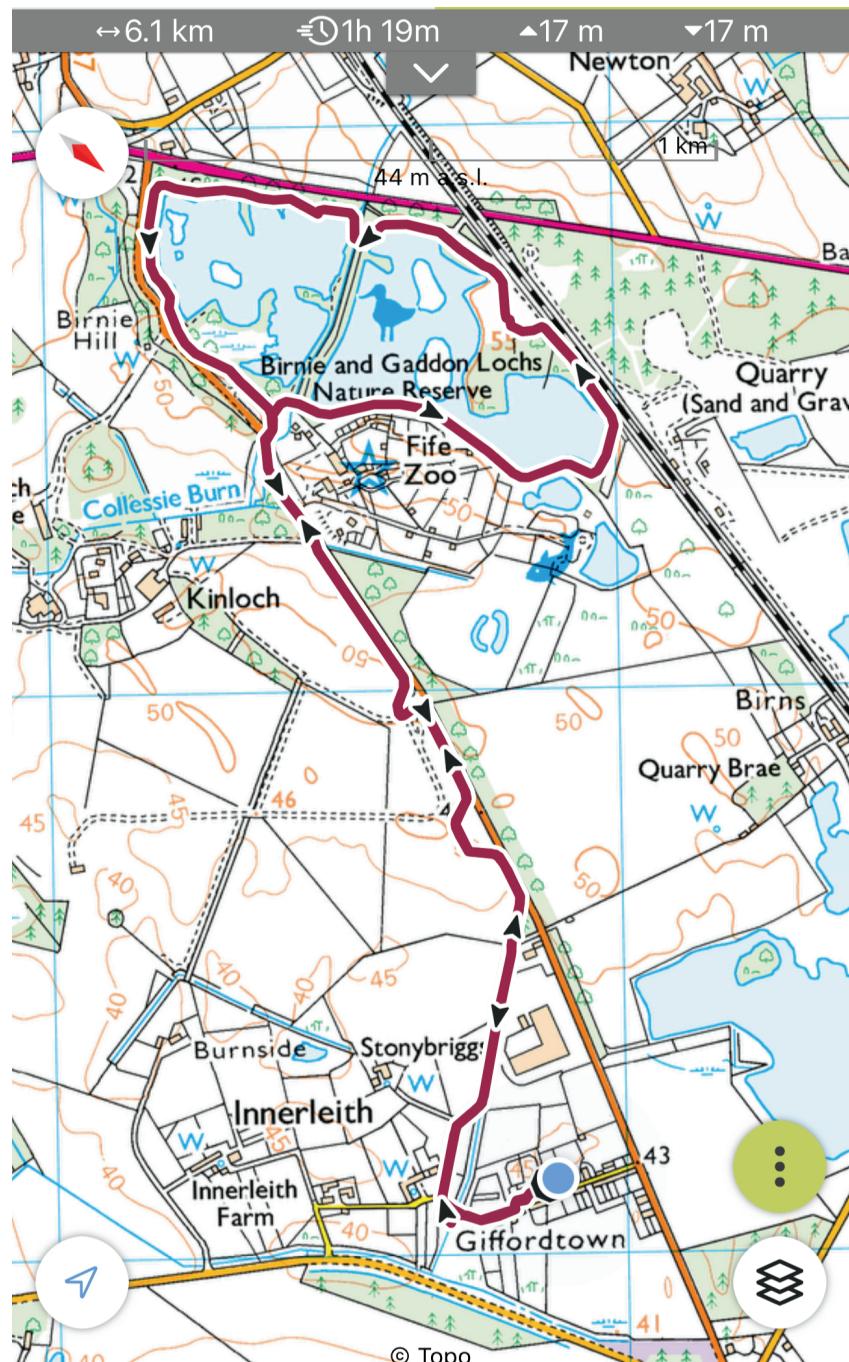
Really Local, Local Walks

Giffordtown to Birnie Loch via the Coffin Road

The Paths Working Group has been busy in late Spring refurbishing the Coffin Road to make it passable and therefore link up to the newly installed Quarry Diversion path. It's heartening to see the Coffin Road is indeed morphing into a much more 'lived in' and natural look now that summer is here and the grass on the path is starting to regrow.



I took a wander down it with Daisy all the way to the Nature Reserve and round both Birnie and Gaddon Lochs. Normally, a path is kept in check by usage and the passage of many feet.



The route I took has long been neglected as it was so overgrown. I have cut the full length from the park to the Kinloch entrance with my ride on mower to keep the grass in check about every two weeks to make it a reasonably decent walk for anyone who is used to countryside walking. Lesley and I did this walk recently but only went around Gaddon. On the way back, we stopped into the Zoo for a cup of tea and a cake, which was a nice way of breaking the journey. It is 'just' suitable for prams and buggies as it is still a bit bumpy, but hopefully that will improve. The signposts with markers should be going in soon. It's well worth the walk.

Paths Working Group Update

By Andrew Christie

The Paths Working Group has had a productive few months, with the recent work on the Coffin Road to level the surface and improving access being completed. A big thank you to those that came out and helped.



The path is beginning to grass over nicely and we are grateful for the positive comments from local residents on the improved access. We hope that this work will enable more people to make use of the path, which should hopefully enable easier maintenance and ensure long term use.

Following ongoing engagement with Lairds we are pleased to have come to an agreement on further enhancements to the diversionary path around the quarry. Over the coming months, the Paths Working Group will look to work with Lairds to ensure the quarry path is maintained to enable access through the cutting of vegetation, flattening of the path surface, installation of stiles and way markers. This should enable good access around the quarry site for local residents to make use of our local path network. Once again thank you to those members of the PWG who continue to help with this work, without which many of our paths would be inaccessible.



The summer months are a big challenge to ensure access along our paths is possible as the vegetation grows. If there are any residents who would like to help with any aspects of the work of the Paths Working Group, then please contact Andrew Christie on giffordtownpaths@gmail.com. There is no long term commitment required and any help is much appreciated, however big or small.



Interesting Times

By John Kennett

Those who have had the good fortune to sit down and have a chat with John will know that he has a wealth of stories under his belt. In this issue of the Gazette, he recounts some of the more interesting things that have happened to him in his service career and beyond. The photo shows John while he was part of the RM ski team. These tales are snapshots of history and there's plenty more to come.



A Sausage identity Parade!

In an area six miles from the sea on the south coast of UK during the first part of WW2 The 51st Highland Division was billeted in the Essex area up to June '44. Because my father was a SNO, we were allowed to stay there. While there, I was 8 years old and I had a visit from my girl cousin and her father, a retired army officer. My cousin I and a maid plus my Nanny went for a walk which went past the billeted soldiers who, on that day, were outside semi sunbathing when one of them turned in our direction and was completely naked. Me, my cousin and Nanny had seen naked men before and thought little of it. However, the maid laughed and when we got home told my mother who told my father who phoned the CO of the 51st Highland Division. The result was that the Adjutant plus RSM were sent to investigate this to determine the severity of the crime. They asked if we could all stand at the garden gate where we saw the soldier that day. Then the Adj plus the RSM and a squaddie with the aid of a cardboard cut out model of a non-descriptive man with a piece of wire in the form of a crank through the model at an appropriate place and a sausage like device placed on the outside hanging down. If we were told the sausage was in any other position then a much more serious crime would involve the RMP and no doubt a prison sentence. "However, since you say not, when I find out who it was I will award a fine." At that we were thanked for help and said goodbye

Catch me if you Can

As far as I know, if I am not the first, I am one of the first to cross the Forth Bridge at over 100 miles an hour, as on the opening day there was no speed limit. But you could be done for Dangerous Driving. I was stopped at the South Bound Pay Booth and Cautioned By Traffic Police who had been told to look out for people like me and let me off with a warning not

to do it again. That was after asking if I had done it. About 107mph in my 3 5ltr Jag Car which I bought for £3k.



Jaguar - the one that crossed the bridge at 107mph

Gunnery School

Back at HMS Drake, it was one lesson after another on anything and everything. Then I spotted a poster 'Join Our Field Gun Crew. The Winning Team. Apply at the Gunnery School.' I spoke to the Chief petty officer (CPO) who took my details and said that they would be in touch. About two weeks on my name was called over the tannoy, "Report to the Gunnery School". As it was my name only, I thought the worse. When I got there a Chief Gunnery instructor (CGI) wanted to see me. He told me that most of the volunteers were strapping great blokes, but he did have space for two smaller guys and if I was keen and passed all the tests I could be a 'Lucky Boy'.

Two weeks later I was told that I was going to Vicarage Road Camp (VRC). The only nice thing was that it was next to the Royal Albert Bridge built by my hero Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Which to me, was the only other rail bridge worth looking at. At night I could walk over it. Wonderful.

At Vicarage Road Camp there were about a 100 'inmates' all there for one thing. Each day a number of them would be taken away for testing. Later that day, some would return very quiet, some in plaster and some not at all. One day, I was called and was taken to a windswept island. We were split up into groups of eight and put on our blue jerseys with a number painted on our backs. I was No 8. A PO I had been talking to said that we had to keep up with him riding a New Hudson Auto cycle. We were to run about seven miles there and about seven miles back.

When we got back we were selected to continue. The rest were Return to Unit (RTU). That evening we were fed mince and tatties. The next day was an assault course day. They gave us a light pack and told us to run round this marked track until they told us to stop. After about six laps, I found a bloke lying on his back in one of the box holes. I rolled him

onto his side and left him and as I passed a PO, I told him about it. He replied that in future just leave them and that I now have 3 mins to make up. After another six to eight rounds, we were stopped and taken to a 6ft wall. There we had one at a time to throw a Field Gun Wheel (FGW) over the wall boss down the way. They weigh 120lbs. I only just managed that test! We then all went back to VRC. Some did not pass. The guy in the box; he died. He was a Sub Lieutenant first RNO for 15yrs. The Sick Berth Attendant (SBA) told me later that I should have laid him over further. He had rolled onto his back and choked. We all went back to VRC rather sad, especially me. We were told not to think about it as we would see a lot worse before we were finished. We went back to the actual Field Gun (FG) huts which were to be our home at least for a while. All went well until someone found out that I was a National Service (NS) man. Then I was asked, "Did I really want to do FG?" "Yes," was my reply. Then someone is going to have to grant permission, likely to be the Commander in Chief (CIC). The CIC thought a good idea would be for him to see me so arrange for the FGO to bring me to Admiralty House at a pre-arranged time; Fri 1500 hrs.

You won't believe it but he is sending a car. It's to be here at 1430hrs to arrive at his front door 1500hrs. I even had to pull the FGO's sword scabbard, fresh cap cover, his boots and all my gear. Just as well I was good at pulling and pressing. I was to stand facing the parade ground and the PO was to direct the car round to face in the right direction. Then on seeing the car approach, I was to sing out, 'Car approaching' (shout). Then when the car stopped at the bottom step I was to sing out, 'Car alongside,' and open the rear passenger door and salute. At that point the FGO would return the salute and climb into the centre of the rear seat. I then opened the front passenger door and got in. Then the driver a RM told me to sit with my hands on my knees, still with my cap on. Standard boat drill.

I should tell you that the car was a Humber Super Snipe and I have never seen such a clean polished car and I was told that there were another three plus one ambulance all as shiny and all looked after by three old RMs.

We arrived at Admiralty house with 5mins to spare I got out first and as FGO foot hit the deck I saluted. And he walked passed and up the front steps of Admiralty house. At the top were 2 Royal Marine stewards, uniform trousers with white jackets, no caps. They walked on either side of the Field Gun Officer until through the inside doors, the RM on the left indicated with his hand that the Field Gun Officer should now, with his cap under his left arm and clutching his sword, should stop just in front of the left hand door. I, at this point, removed my cap and put it under my left arm, paused until told by the left hand RM, who announced us, Lt. Palmer and able seaman Kennett. We were then told to proceed forwards, where I could see the admiral standing, just to the right, a great big fireplace with burning logs. Further to the right was Lady Madden who was sitting along the side of a large grand piano. I went forward and he greeted me by shaking hands and saying 'thank you for coming, and you had better park your cap on the piano', which I did. He then said

'we had all better sit down'. He in his comfy chair and me in an upright chair. (no doubt put there for me). I duly then sat. I also acknowledged Lady Madden before I sat down with a slight bow, which made her smile. He then asked how my mother and father were and that he heard that he had been given a good command at last, which he followed by saying North Berwick, and with a good laird. This confused me for a minute, then I worked it out that he was referring to Lord Haddington. 'Good chap although he was a pongo (what the Navy called the Army) with a tin hat plus a plume (as a CO of the Household Cavalry).' At this, he went on about my dad's parish, North Berwick, suggesting that with a bit of luck it might not be too long before he became a bishop. He then mentioned the present bishop, K. Warner. This I corrected him by politely saying that the present bishop was A. Carey. 'Well done' said the admiral, 'he was one of our chaplains and if I'm right, Warner was an RAF lawyer.' He then said 'I suppose we ought to talk business, after all that is why you are here. So, you want to join our Field Gun crew' 'Yes sir' I said enthusiastically. 'Good' he said, 'and you have passed all the tests with flying colours I see. Well done. Well, as far as I am concerned, you have my blessing, which is probably not the right term for a vicar's son, however, it will do. I will now do my bit but you'll have to do your best to go and win and bring back the trophy to Devonport. I wish you luck and don't forget to give my regards to the commander and your mother.' He then stood up and shook my hand. I said I would try my best. I took one pace back, bowed to him, then turned towards Lady Madden, bowed again. She did not say anything but did smile. He then said not to forget my cap, which I retrieved from the piano, turned and walked back to where Lt. Palmer was standing. He turned after a gentle bow towards the admiral and then the doors opened as if by magic, he leading with me following, down the steps of Admiralty House to the Humber Super Snipe car, with the rear door open and a RM in full blues with bussed boots so shiny they were like a camera obscura. He then turned and saluted and I noted that he had three rows of medal ribbons. The Field Gun Officer climbed into the back after saluting. I had to open the front passenger door and get into the car.

We drove off with the driver muttering under his breath, 'I hope you did not touch the car.' We arrived back at the FGO and I was out like a shot to do my bit, opening the rear door and saluting, along with our Field Gun PO, who also saluted. When the car disappeared, the Field Gun Officer said, 'my office, now.' The Field Gun PO, 'well sir, do we keep him' The Field Gun Officer replied 'well, for good or bad, yes, we keep him.' The FGO then parked his sword in the umbrella stand and his cap on the coat hook and told me that I had better change into field gun spec and I will see you on Monday morning on field gun parade 09.00 and at that the PO said if it will be okay to tell the Chief Petty Officer Gunnery Instructor. 'I suppose so.' There was no comment about the fact that poor Lt. Palmer had been left standing just inside the doors of admiralty house for 3/4 of an hour and that the admiral had not even said a word about it. Lt. Palmer muttered to the PO, 'He might have said thank you but that's an admiral for you.'

Roadside Flower Tubs

By Elaine Bailey

Intro

Early in the year one of the questions raised at the Giffordtown and District Community Council meeting was 'what could we spend some of the accumulating funds on?' One suggestion was flower tubs for the road through the hamlets to add to the ones maintained by Margaret and Sue at the playpark and the one at the Kinloch road-end. The Community Council agreed to fund the idea and a small group comprising Jan, Nicola, Gillian, Helen and Elaine was formed to take forward the initiative.

Planning

Initial discussions considered the types of tubs available, and the number required. An 'on the hoof' meeting was set up to identify potential sites along the roadway and a photographic plan drawn up in order to provide feedback to the Community Council on the ideas. Bearing in mind watering and maintenance needs, careful thought was given to suitable types of plants. In view of the drier, hotter summers of late, more drought resistant plants were considered a good option. Talking is all very well but what about some action?

Tubs

Old whisky barrels were selected as a sustainable, enduring solution avoiding the use of plastic and providing robust tubs with good surface area for planting. A source of good quality, reasonably priced, oak 'half barrels' was identified at the unlikely sounding 'Adventure Golf Island' located at the Fife Leisure Park outside Dunfermline. In the summer you can buy barrels, play crazy golf, enjoy a snack and get the car washed all in one place.....in winter you can also buy Christmas trees! A trip was duly organised, and 8 barrels loaded up with the help of the Adventure Golf staff. No turning back now.

Soil

From the outset, there was some concern about obtaining adequate amounts of growing medium for the tubs. Part of the Community Council funding was used to purchase peat free compost and this was supplemented by a generous donation of topsoil obtained from Kettle Produce. On the day of soil collection, an ageing trailer was severely tested as a 'digger bucket' full

of soil was unceremoniously dropped into it, while the collection team was severely reprimanded for daring to step out of the car without yellow safety vests on. Happily, after a snail's pace journey all arrived safely back in the hamlets. Work could begin.

Setting up

With a diminishing likelihood of frost, mid-April saw the first barrels positioned on the roadside. Several of the locations selected at the planning stage were, in the end, unsuitable and some adjustments were made. Shifting the barrels and soil required some additional muscle power and Ryan, Stewart and Nick assisted at this stage. Barrels were mounted on old bricks to assist with drainage and the barrel bottoms were filled with old roof tiles, plant pots etc to further enhance drainage and ensure enough compost and soil was available for the whole project. The barrels were not going anywhere! – it was time for the plants.

Planting

The barrels in each of the hamlets were allocated to different teams of planters who were invited to select their own planting schemes. While efforts were made to source as many drought resistant, low maintenance species and varieties as possible, availability at garden centres etc did not always facilitate this and mixtures of plants were used. The Community Council funded the purchase of the selected plants and in addition, the group benefited from a significant contribution of plants grown by John Sanders. These include dwarf sunflowers, dwarf dahlias, geraniums and Cerinthe – all fully 'road-tested' over the years at the corner of John's garden! Planting was completed a couple of weeks ago. So, we can all go home and put our feet up now – not quite.

Maintenance

While the barrels and many of the plants are robust and hardy, the plants, even the more drought resistant ones, do require some water during dry periods. The planting group have an informal arrangement for checking whether the tubs need watering but others are invited to periodically check tubs located near to them and to water as required. For the future, as the seasons change, decisions will be needed on how to plant up the tubs to provide continuity in the display. Indeed, some of the earliest tubs this year contained spring bulbs and plants which have now been superseded by flowers of the summer and autumn. Folk may have suggestions for future years and an opportunity for feedback seems

sensible. At some point in the year, probably the spring, some soil/compost 'refreshment' will be needed and others may wish to become involved in the process.

Impact

As the summer sun really begins to do its magic, the plants are now growing fast and some of the brighter, colourful varieties will not be long before they bloom, joining the earlier flowering ones. It is of course to be hoped that the tubs will enhance the roadside and help those using the road to see they are travelling through

communities of people who care about the place and wish it to look attractive and colourful. Views from the planning group include the hope that this will in time help to reduce discarded litter along the roadside and of course contribute to a reduction in speeding through the 40 mph zone as drivers realise they are more likely to encounter pedestrians, dog walkers, cyclists, children, elderly folk etc. Perhaps this is wishful thinking, but it's a start and hopefully others will feel encouraged to sample the hamlets 'whisky barrel experience' in the coming months.



Kinloch House - A Pictorial History

By Steve Wilson

These are the best two scans I can do, then digitally modify the various photographs I have of Kinloch House, but I love the stark contrast in these pictures. Bear in mind these pictures are over a hundred years old.

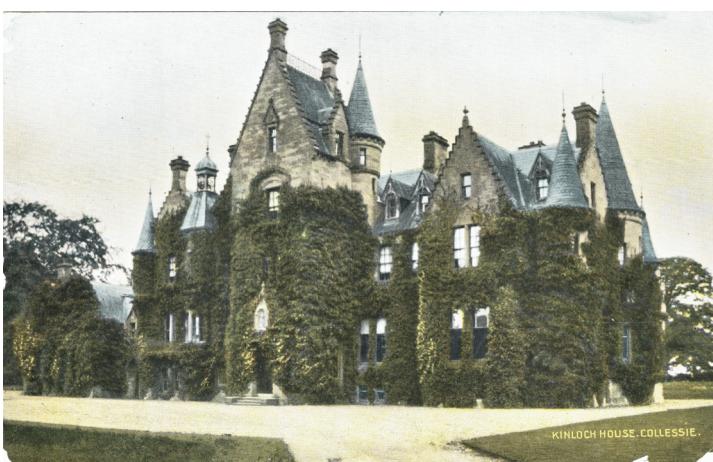
The pictures I have with the foliage on it all date from 1902-1912 and after the massive task of removing it all, the "after" photograph is circa 1920.

It's nice seeing the original annexe added to the left hand side which was subsequently replaced by a 1960 or 70s flat-roofed monstrosity that never fitted its surroundings, albeit this was during the period in which Kinloch House was used as a Church of Scotland Edentide Home. Thankfully, Angie & Nick Emler have had the passion and taste to put this right during their on-going time as custodians of this wonderful property. Interestingly the annex on the left (shown with windows) also appears in other pictures with 2 sets of large double doors at some point in its history.

It's also nice to see Kinloch House without the elevator shaft that was built in the 1980's by Bill Cluckie, stonemason, for the elderly residents of the Edentide home. To be fair, Bill did an amazing job and was meticulous in his sourcing of the size and colour of stone to keep it as true to the original as possible and sympathetic to its surroundings.

In relation to Kinloch itself, and taken from the late George Calley's book "Collessie - A Parish Alphabet" what is not as commonly known is that Kinloch (modern spelling) as an area/lands has a 900 year old history dating back to 1163 AD and came about from owners of the lands. A charter from 1241 AD which was discovered in an office in Edinburgh refers to "the family of Kinloch" and was witnessed by Sir Roger de Quinci, Earl of Winchester and Morin de Kindeloch. There was also an owner called William de Kyndeloch.

After a bit of research I found, in later years, that Kinloch appears on a 1654 map of Fife as Keanloch which in gaelic translates as Kean (King or head) and loch (self evident). For a time Kinloch was the most populated area here and occupants settled at the head of the loch but were evacuated before 1825 after a Law Plea to have the villagers removed.



Pumpkin

By Jessica Balfour



I would like to introduce you to Pumpkin, our lockdown kitten, who is now nearly three. We collected her from a family in Edinburgh where she had been living with both her parents and litter mates. The family was from Kazakhstan so we didn't think Pumpkin had heard much English spoken. She seemed pretty horrified to find herself in a house in the country, with a huge Golden Retriever as a companion. She was so shy at first that she disappeared into the back of her furry igloo and refused to come out. She did slowly start to get used to us, so this is what she has to say about herself now.

Q How do you like living at Kinloch?

A I love the freedom of being able to be in or out. I miaow at the window to get in, and miaow to go out again. I can do this as often as I like because if the humans are too slow, I scratch the paintwork and that gets them moving. Sometimes I go out by the window and then run round to come in at the back door so I can do it again.

Q What do you like to eat?

A Well, that depends on the day. If there's something like chicken or fish in my bowl, I'll usually just take a bite and then ask for some crunch. If there's crunch available, I like them to put out some wet food. If I can find butter or yoghurt in the kitchen, I'll sample that. If the milk jug has been left out I can have a taste when nobody's looking.

Q How do you get attention?

A I only miaow for going in and out. For anything else, I

just make sure I'm close to somebody. On their keyboard if they're doing boring stuff on the computer, or on their lap if they're trying to eat or drink something. If I flick my head at the right moment, food and drink go flying, so that's entertaining. Outside, I hide in the car or the Landrover, and surprise them.

Q Where do you sleep?

A I used to have a furry igloo, but that's upstairs now with teddies in it. I like to choose different beds. I like the stove, particularly if there is a pile of towels on it. The laundry basket is good, and I can help with the ironing. During the day, I sleep on whichever chair is most popular with the humans.

Q How do you get on with the dogs?

A Posy and Nina are not too bad really. I just make sure they know what my rules are. Sometimes I stretch out on their beds just to remind them who's boss. It's a bit different with visiting dogs, and I sometimes end up climbing trees to get away from them. Outrageous. One day I might snap and scratch their noses.

Q What's been your naughtiest trick?

A Actually it was a bit scary! I didn't realise the dishwasher was going to get shut, and I had already climbed in behind it to explore behind the kitchen units. I seemed to be there for hours crying, and I could hear everyone shouting 'Pumpkin! Pumpkin!'. They were really shocked when they opened the dishwasher and I came out from underneath. I never did that again.

Q Are there other cats at Kinloch?

A There are a few. The big fluffy one from next door sometimes comes round exploring, but mostly we keep to our own home patches. We're all on mouse patrol here.

Q What is your idea of a perfect day?

A Easy. In, out, food, out, in, sleep, repeat.



A Postcard from Los Angeles

by Catherine Ellison

At last, we were on a flight to Heathrow and onwards to Los Angeles. I have been stressing more than usual as a strike by security staff was on the cards for the day we travelled to Heathrow Terminal 5.

Well.....No difficulty at all at Heathrow, just the 10-hour flight and dire American Airlines food (we took homemade GF sandwiches) to endure till we pick up our hire car.



They tried to get Andrea and I to take this sports car but where was the luggage going to go?

Thank goodness for Google maps, we negotiated with relative ease the LA roads to get to my daughter's apartment.

The highlights of a whistle stop tour of LA which Cara had meticulously organised with extras to add in or take out.

You know I love gardening and food so photographs of plants and trees predominate on my camera



We made extensive use of Uber to do lunch, dinner and sight see. We visited all those names you hear tossed around on social media, Sunset Boulevard, Rodeo Drive, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica and Venice Beach

Always with a cocktail and delicious Californian food not too far away.

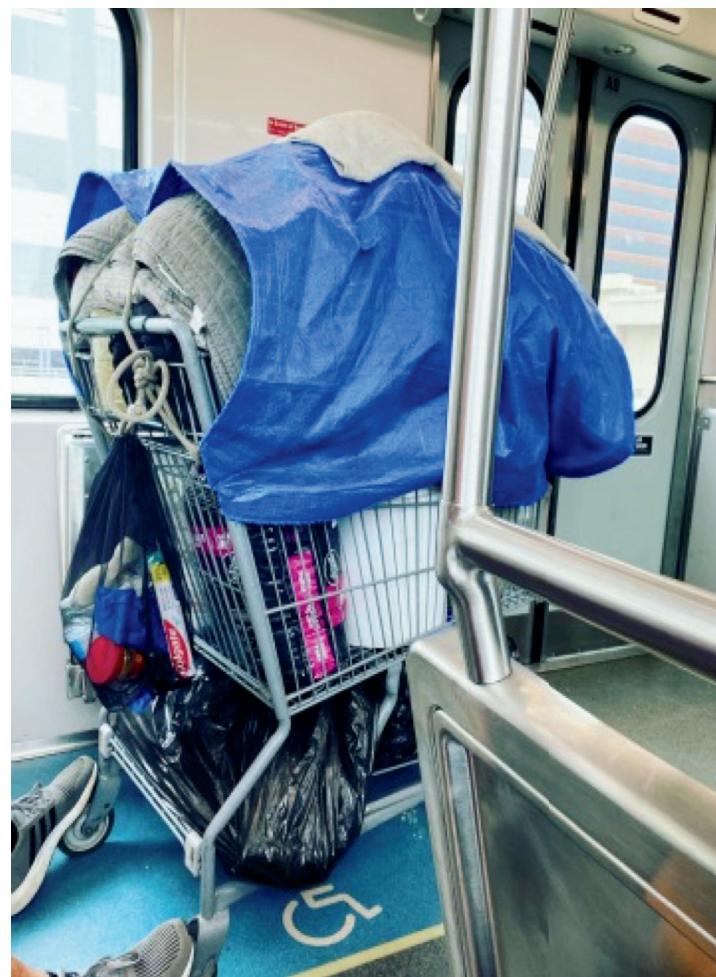


LA would not have been a top choice for us to visit but I have to say there is plenty to see and do. One of the most interesting buildings was Union Station in Downtown LA. It has recently been refurbished to its original grand style.



We used the hire car to visit The Getty Museum in the hills and to take Cara and Brian to the Huntington Botanical Gardens near Pasadena. The gardens are magnificent spread over 206 acres. The South American and desert plants were so strange and amazing to see but also their rose collection is stunning.

Well, our whirlwind trip was short, it was over in a flash. We had to say goodbye but not before a Spa Day in Santa Monica and a trip on the Metro train. I took this picture on the train.



One man's life in a trolley...

...this brought the mood back to reality. We were so lucky to spend some time with my daughter and her husband and to see all the sights that we could pack into 6 days.

“Once a year go somewhere you’ve never been before” The Dalai Lama

The Giffordtown Writers

Glue

by Doug Wightman

Chaim Lolosky is a young polish Jewish refugee, come to London to stay with his aunt and uncle.

At last, they found his uncle's shop, "Isaac Lolosky, Sponge Dealer" it said above the door, in scarlet and gold lettering, and in the window, "Enormous stock of every description of sponges always on hand, bleached or natural can be had in original packages as received from all the fisheries or in any way most suited to the customer's requirements". As they entered the shop, tinkling the bell above the door, a heavily built man in a brown cotton overall appeared from the back shop, wiping the crumbs off his walrus moustache and licking his lips.

"Hymie, my boy, Hymie! Wonderful to see you, we thought you were never coming," and hugging him to his chest cried 'Miriam, he's here!' His aunt bustled through, 'My, Hymie, look at you. Look how you've grown! You were only a little boy when we saw you last, and you're a young man now. Oh! You've got your mother's eyes!' His aunt kissed him again and again, and pressed him to her ample bosom as he blushed and wriggled with embarrassment.

For the first couple of days, Chaim helped his uncle in the shop, tidying up, sweeping the floor, and unpacking parcels. Chaim was astonished at the variety of sponges; their sizes, their shapes, their colours. He couldn't believe his uncle when he told him they were the skeletons of dead sea creatures. The following Sunday, Uncle Issy appeared with a large bundle of newspapers.

"Now Hymie my boy, we're going to educate the people."

"What do you mean, uncle Issy?"

"This here is The Commonweal'. It's a newspaper for working people. It talks about how we are oppressed, and how we can fight against this oppression. Have you ever heard of Anarchism? Your aunt and I are supporters of the Labour Emancipation League. We want to do away with kings and tsars and suchlike. We want to make the world a better place. To change the lot of working people. Now we're going to Goulston Street market, and sell these newspapers."

London at that time was full of revolutionary groups; anarchists, nihilists, anarcho-socialists, communists, Irish independence supporters, all of whom hated one another, many of whom espoused extreme violence in the name of their cause, often in random acts of destruction.

42 Summer 2023

It was only a short walk along Whitechapel Road to Goulston St. As they turned off Whitechapel High St. the first thing Chaim noticed was the noise. A roar of stall holders, shoppers and punters of every kind, crying and shouting in a dozen languages. Second hand clothes stalls, fruit barrows, fishmongers, butchers. Tempting smells came through the doors of the cooked meat shops. He was not however tempted by the jellied eel shop, partly as he knew they were not kosher anyway. Saveloy and pie vendors carried their trays through the crowd, rauously extolling the virtues of their wares. Stalls were selling live rabbits, chickens, ducks, canaries in cages, and toys, furniture, bedding, and crockery, much of it second or third hand. Shifty looking characters were playing find the lady, and other card games. Uncle Issy found a space and began shouting,

"Commonweal newspaper! Commonweal newspaper! Learn the real news! The stuff you don't get in the other papers! Read about the Labour Emancipation League." There were few takers. Later, Issy took Chaim over to one of the butchers' stalls, selling offal and cheap cuts.

"This is the boy I told you about. He was brought up on a farm, he knows how to handle horses."

"Can he speak English?"

"Not yet, but he's a bright lad. I'm enrolling him this afternoon at the Rabbi's English class."

"He can start at Knibbs' next week. Ten bob a week."

"Arthur Knibbs, Glue and Chemical Works," it said, painted on the tall brick chimney, which belched out noxious clouds of yellowish smoke. As Chaim and his uncle approached, the smell became increasingly unpleasant, a mixture of rancid fat and decaying animal matter. As they entered the works and climbed the stair to the foreman's office, Chaim struggled to keep the contents of his stomach down. He stood on the landing and looked around in the dim light. It was an image of hell, like a landscape by Hieronymus Bosch.

There was a constant clamour of crashing machinery, squealing rubber conveyor belts, slicing blades and sounds of grating metal. A man came in from the courtyard pushing a huge barrow laden with animal heads. These were then loaded onto a conveyor belt where they were separated into horses, sheep, cows and pigs. The men loading the bloody heads grabbed them by the snout, the horns, or often by sticking their fingers in the festering eye sockets. A bloody sludge slid off the conveyor belt as the heads travelled along the conveyor belt until they came to a table at the end, where four

brutish figures chopped them in to three, wielding their huge cleavers with a nonchalance which defied the hazards of the job. The meat cutters' jackets were spattered with animal waste and encrusted with what looked like years of filth, and had the appearance of some kind of ghastly rigid carapace. One was casually eating a sandwich with one bloody hand while hacking with his cleaver in the other. The heads were then thrown into huge cauldrons heated by fires stoked from below. The smell of scorching flesh and fat filled the air as clouds of steam belched from the vats. In a massive grinder, the cooked flesh was made into a sludge, which, slopping and wobbling in a tank, drained to the outside through a rusty, filth encrusted pipe and into five gallon barrels to be stored in the courtyard. Chaim had to lean onto the railing of the landing for support. And then he looked down again and saw that the floor was not only plastered with a bloody layer of putrid waste, but there were patches of moving white maggots. As he passed out his uncle managed to grab him. When he came round, he heard the foreman say,

'Don't worry Mr Lolosky, they all do that. It's alright son, you'll be working outside in the yard with the horses.'

Uncle Issy explained and Chaim was taken outside and shown the stables where his first job was to muck them out. This was a great relief, and was the same work he had done on the estate where he lived. He smiled as he stroked one of the immense carthorses.

'We're going to be friends, you and me.'

Chaim settled into his job, and soon picked up the rudiments of English, especially after he joined the Jewish Lads' Brigade, and made new friends. He gave five shillings each week to his aunt and uncle, and saved up the rest to send home to his parents via the Jewish Remittance Bank in Cheapside.

As usual on a Thursday evening, Isaac Lolosky attended a meeting of the Labour Emancipation League in a printing shop in Spitalfields. There was a bigger crowd than usual, as the speaker was the founder of the movement, the anarchist Frank Kitz. Isaac sat as attentively as he could, but his mind was elsewhere, anticipating the meeting he had arranged for later that evening. As he walked homewards that rainy evening, his cap pulled down over his ears, his hands thrust deep in his coat pockets, the gas street lighting reflected in the puddles, the cabs splashed him as they went by. The streets were deserted other than a few drunks reeling out of the pubs. He was approached by the butcher he had met at Goulston St. market that Sunday a few weeks previously.

'When the spring comes the flowers will bloom.'

'I will tend my garden,' replied Isaac. Having got their

rather histrionic secret passwords out of the way, they fell in together and walked the quiet streets together.

'Is the boy settled into the job at Knibb's?'

'Seems to be,' replied Isaac. 'He's a bright lad, and not afraid of hard work. Boss says he's a good worker'

'What does he know of our organisation?'

'Nothing really. He knows Miriam and I are in the LEL, and he comes to the market with me on Sundays to sell the Commonweal, but he really knows nothing more. I thought he was too young to get into the political stuff.'

'Can he keep his mouth shut? Can we trust him? We don't want to mess it up like Marcel Boudrain at the Greenwich Observatory, Shem Yisboroch bless him.'

'Yes, he'll do whatever I ask. He can be relied upon to do as he's told. He won't ask questions.'

'Here's the goods then. Look after it.'

Next morning, Chaim was putting his jacket on, ready to set off.

'Hymie, I want you to take a parcel in to work today. Later this afternoon, a man with a red beard and a white muffler will come into the stable yard. You'll give him the parcel, that's all you have to do. It's very fragile, so handle it carefully, and whatever you do don't drop it. Keep it under your jacket, and don't say anything to anyone else about it.' It was an innocuous looking small parcel, wrapped in brown paper.

'Don't worry uncle Issy, it's as good as done.'

That afternoon, the stranger appeared as arranged, and Chaim handed over the parcel.

Next morning, Chaim set off for work as usual, clutching his baked potato which doubled as a hand-warmer and his dinner. As he approached Knibbs' works, the road was flooded and firemen's hoses snaked across the road. Barriers lay across the road, and dozens of policemen stood about. To his horror, firemen were working on the remains of the factory, a tangle of smouldering timbers and mangled machinery. Most hideous of all, the road, the pavements and the surrounding buildings were plastered in animal waste; heads, bones, body parts, slurry, and skins from Everhard and Co, the bladder dealers next door which had also been destroyed. The adjacent Braun and Bloem's detonator factory on the other side of the building had been totally obliterated. The stench was appalling, and many of the police were clutching wet rags to their faces.

'What is this here?' he asked one of the policeman in his halting English.

'Another bomb explosion. Four of 'em last night in London. It'll be those Fenian bastards for certain son, mark my words,' he replied.

Buyers are Liars - Part 2

by Neil Brooks

Frank, the senior executive, aka paranoid schizophrenic, introduces Martin, the new sales person to prospective customers...

"This is Martin. He's new and will be observing today," he explained to the couple. They looked to be about early forties in age, well dressed in smart clothes which were clean - not always something that you can take for granted, and seemed genuinely interested. They smiled at me and we shook hands, Mr and Mrs Bell, Jeff and Ella. First names was a good start. I took a slight step back to give Frank the floor and show me how it's done. He clasped his hands together firmly in a clapping sort of motion which included the loud smacking sound, 'Now what car was it you came in to see today?' I'll give him his due, he had already made the assumption they are here to look at a specific car rather than have a day off to wander around aimlessly.

"Nothing really Frank. We're just here to have a little look around and see what you have," replied Jeff, still smiling but also waving a hand round in a general sweep to indicate the whole showroom. 'Aren't we love?' He concluded by looking at his wife and taking her arm. 'Oh yes Jeff. I just love all these cars and can never decide which one I look best in. It's going to be my car you see. I probably shouldn't say this,' there was a giggle and lifting of the shoulders while ducking the head and looking coy, 'but Jeff is going to buy it for me as a present. Aren't you Jeff?' This was not posed as a question, it was a matter of fact. In any case, she followed it up by squeezing him closer and smiling at him. I have seen this a few times in all age groups. Couples come in who seem to genuinely like each other and may actually be in love. The other end of the extreme were the couples that could barely manage to stay civil to each other for the short time they were with us. It made no difference that they were airing their dirty washing in front of a bemused sales person. It was like the aristocracy of the olden times when the lords and ladies would discuss the most intimate of dealings in front of the servants as if they were not there. I have to say though, it is much more fun to listen to a couple having what they think is a coded row, laden with subtext and innuendo. Frank is already beginning to seeth because someone had the temerity to come into his space and not know what kind of car they want to buy! Ridiculous, I know! These buyers had fallen clearly into the liars category and Frank had no time for liars, loved up or not.

He was literally hopping from foot to foot as he struggled to find a way to get the nice young Bells into a new car. I was standing slightly at the side waiting for pearls of

wisdom, but this came from Frank instead.

'What do you mean you're just looking? You're in a car showroom, we sell cars, you buy them. That's the deal. That's what happens here. What's so difficult about that?' The smiling couple did not notice that Frank had spoken, so lost were there in each other. I looked from them to Frank and back again a few times. Frank was beginning to stew. If he were a storm, he was probably a category 3 at this stage.

'Tell me something.' Frank was scratching his head as he said this and wearing a puzzled look on his face. 'We have cars here. Now, which one have you come to see?' The couple, maybe by some sixth sense or just because they had stopped staring into each others eyes and had noticed that Frank was not the cheerful happy go lucky salesman he was a few moments ago, but had transformed into something with a face like granite that had been blasted by dynamite. Their smiles had disappeared and changed into open mouthed shock. 'I'm sorry,' mumbled Jeff. This was not an apology, but an expression of disbelief. As in, "What did you just say to me?"

Franks' eyes were in turmoil again and he was clenching his fists. I can't think why this couple seemed to have sent him off the deep end so much but he had dived off the highest board and was now struggling to maintain his composure.

Frank continued, "This is simple. Let me explain it so that even you can understand. Step one: you come in to a car showroom. Step two: you see a car you like. Step three: we give you a great deal. Step four: you leave a couple of happy bunnies." Frank punctuated each point by thrusting the index finger of his right hand towards alternately from Jeff to Ella. A couple of more inches and it would have been touching their noses. His other hand was keeping score of the four step plan he had just outlined, each additional point meant another finger was raised. He now had four raised fingers and he was waving this hand in front of their faces as if that would make it simpler. A trace of a frown was beginning to form on Jeff's forehead and he had let go of his wife and was now facing Frank with his full attention. Ella's arms were still poised in mid air, leaving them in the same position as they had been before Jeff had detached himself. Her head bobbed back and forward between Frank and Jeff, her lips pursing and releasing as if there was a question forming but it could not quite be formulated. Jeff was the first to speak, 'Wait a minute here Frank. I don't think I like the way that you're speaking to us. We're the customer here and you need to treat us with at least a bit of common courtesy and respect. Or there's no chance of us buying a car. Do you get what I'm saying here Frank?'

...to be continued

A Haggis in a Bottle

By Ian Ledward

'Yareet wor kid?'

'Aye, canny fettle man.
But what's aal this?
Why's it in a bottle
if ye cannit drink it like beor?
What's it aal aboot canny lad?'

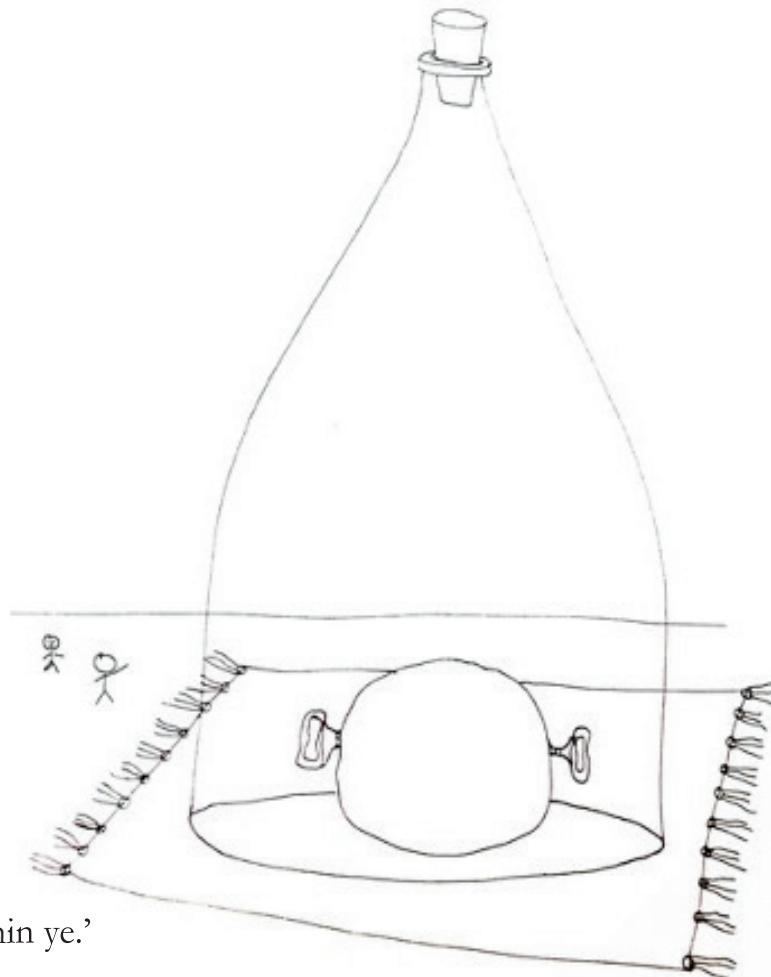
'Why, ye knaa man, it's art.
It's what the' caal an installation
in London.

'Howay man; haddaway and shite.
There's ni point if you cannit drink it.
Ah think yer gannin' akka.
Just hoy it doon the netty
while you're sitting there
pondering the universe the neet.
That's what aa'd dee like.'

'Calm doon, bonny lad. Calm doon.
Aa knaa the artist ye see,
an' ah think it's canny good like,
an' he's geet canny an aal.
Ye see, it's meant to stir something within ye.'

'You mean like haggis and fried onions?
Geet lush bag o' Tudas, that'd be like;
they'd gan doon champion with a haggis aal reet
an' a bottle of broon.'

But, I'll tell yuh for nowt,
I've had enough u' yer 'installation' business.
Am proppa paggered,
aal paid oot,
and clamping for me bait
and am gan hyem noo, ni hesitation -
I just cannit wait to stot off to me mam's
doon the Market Gate.'



Good to Know

Thinking of borrowing the e-bikes? Here's what you need to know...



G&DCC have two e-bikes for use by all local residents and their friends and families. Initially, there will be no charge and no deposit to encourage participation. The scheme will be reviewed regularly. Donations towards the scheme and/or upkeep of the bike(s) will be gratefully received.

- **Ensure you have read and understood the user instruction booklet before using the bike(s). Do not rely solely on the briefing.**
- You can borrow the bikes for between half a day and two weeks in any one period. They are ready to ride.
- You must make arrangements to collect the bike(s) and return at the end of the loan period.
- Clean bike. **Charge battery fully before returning or pay £0.50 per bar.** Full charge in 5hrs. Do not charge for more than 18hrs.
- Agree a return date and time and confirm a representative of G&DCC can be present to conduct a visual inspection of the bike(s).
- Each bike is equipped with lights, horn, pannier bag, backpack, padlock, puncture repair kit, pump, phone holder and charging equipment.
- The Borrower will provide themselves with helmet, high viz clothing, and any other items as necessary.
- The bike(s) must be kept in a locked place and secured with the supplied padlock to an immovable object when not in use.
- If the bike(s), battery, attachments or accessories are damaged, lost or stolen, G&DCC may arrange for any repairs or replacements as necessary to put the bikes in a state of good repair, appearance and condition. These repairs will be made within a reasonable time from the end of the loan period. G&DCC will give the Borrower written notice of and invoices for the said repairs. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by G&DCC and the Borrower, the Borrower will pay any costs for repair or replacement within 30 days of receipt of the invoice. The price examples stated below are indicative only, and the Borrower's liability will not be limited to these figures if the actual loss sustained is greater. Complete bike £1500, battery £230, Tyre £39.99, Inner tube £19.99, Keys £5. The Borrower should check their insurance covers these costs.
- Inspect the bike and note any marks or damage, missing accessories etc, otherwise you will be responsible for repairs or replacements. Minor scuffs, scrapes and scratches are accepted as part of normal usage wear and tear.
- G&DCC are not responsible for checking suitability of riders. Only the named Borrower and their friends or family should use the bike. The Borrower remains the responsible person when the bike(s) are out on loan, even if they are not the actual rider.
- The Borrower will use the bike(s) in a good and careful manner and only for the purpose for which the bike(s) are designed.
- The bike(s) can fold up. You can take it in your vehicle for use in another area during the loan period. Read instructions before attempting to fold or unfold. Use supplied Velcro strap to secure wheels and pad to protect frame. **WARNING: They are heavy - 27kg.**
- Operation of the scheme will be reviewed periodically. G&DCC reserves the right to modify or suspend the scheme without prior notice for essential maintenance, repairs, misuse, or theft etc. Therefore, bookings cannot be guaranteed and while G&DCC will inform you as soon as possible, no liability will be accepted for loss incurred as a result of change of plans.
- The bikes have a stated battery life range of 30-60km per charge. It depends how you use it and the terrain; therefore, you need to plan accordingly. G&DCC are not responsible if the actual range achieved is less than this. But you can still pedal as per a normal bike.
- **G&DCC accepts no liability for any loss, accidents or damage; to the Borrower, third party or property, incurred while the bike is out on loan howsoever caused, included malfunction of the bike for any reason. You may want to consider arranging your own third party liability insurance to ensure you are covered in the event of an incident or accident involving a third part or property.**

Kris Low - Fish Man: 0771 781581. Tuesday.

Milkman: 01337 840820.

Community Police: Mark Lowe & Kirsty Haddow
HoweofFifeTaycoastCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Community Website:
www.thefivewayscommunity.com

Next Community Council Meeting

Monday 3rd July. Village Hall, 7:30pm
All 189 residents of our area are invited.

Community Council Chair: Neil Brooks,
07938828589, giffordtownsecretary@gmail.com

Library: www.onfife.com/libraries-archives