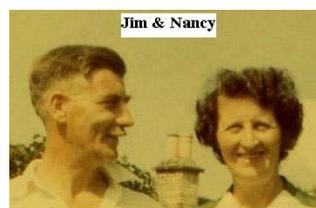


Chapter 41
1957 – 1958
Bannockburn /Glasgow University (iii) – 1957/58

Christmas Day, 1957 brought the continuation of Aunt Margot and Buckie's hosting of the annual Henderson festive lunch in their home at 20 Ronald Place, Riverside, Stirling, and it is worth recording here those who were present, not only to tuck-in to the fruits of Buckie's culinary skills, but also to enjoy what Santa had brought Margot and Buckie's daughter, seven-year-old Alison, and the customary exchanging of gifts.



After lunch, my dad casually mentioned that the manager of Stirling Albion Football Club, Tom Fergusson, had invited me play a trial two days later against Dunfermline Athletic at Annfield, and that he had accepted on my behalf. I was flabbergasted and immediately wished that I had not eaten in such massive proportions. The fact that my services were dispensed with after only 45 minutes of the subsequent match has of course been mentioned in a previous chapter!

My return to 'varsity in January was firstly marked by a nasty bout of flu, nursed faithfully by dear Mrs Hutcheon. Then, one evening, the 13th of February actually, after two weeks of abortive work-outs with Third Lanark FC at Cathkin, I was rushed to the Victoria Infirmary in Glasgow with suspected appendicitis. The offending appendage was successfully removed within a few hours of my arrival, and, apart from worrying a little about what I was missing in my laboratory work, I eventually quite enjoyed my time in hospital.

Despite the interruption, I again passed the termly test in Maths, and did adequate catch-up in the other two subjects. Thus, against the odds, I gained my three 'class-tickets' and thus entry to the final degree examinations in June. However, I was not really a 'happy chappy' as I was becoming increasingly doubtful about my desire to gain this passport to being a Science

teacher. So, without too much heart-searching, and with the encouragement of my 'mentor', Dawson Lambert, the PE teacher at the High School of Stirling, I filled out application forms for entry to the Scottish School of Physical Education (SSPE) at Jordanhill College with the hope of training to become a PE teacher instead.

I gained an interview at the SSPE and did very well in the severe practical tests imposed on would-be recruits. However, the interviews with the Principals of both the College and the SSPE were not too encouraging as they both tried hard to persuade me to continue with my degree studies before undertaking a post-graduate course with them in PE. I remained adamant throughout this grilling that my heart and mind was not in Science, but PE, and, in due course I was informed that I would be one of the group of twenty-nine out of nine hundred and twelve applicants who would be admitted to the course in October, 1958 but with the proviso in my case that I gain at least two degree passes in my current Science course at the university. This suited me nicely as I then concentrated on Mathematics and Natural Philosophy and passed these degree subjects with relative ease in the June finals.

The financial implications were that my parents would not receive the normal government grant because of the change of course, but here I was again 'blessed', because they not only could afford to subsidise my move, but also admitted that together we had made an error in the first place by opting for a Science degree programme for me. However, I worked throughout the summer with the SSEB as before and gained a degree of independence from the cash carefully saved from my wages.

I predicted exciting times ahead while studying and playing a wide range of sporting activities. Subsequently this choice of re-direction of career path proved to be the right one, as the knowledge, skills and understandings I absorbed over the next three years at the SSPE brought out the best in my personality, my competitive instincts and crucially my ability to teach others about how to best enjoy participation in sports that suited them.

