

Chapter 35
1950 – 1957
Stirling / Bannockburn
Home, School and Play – 1956-57 (v)

The deletion of ‘Cambusbarron’ from the title of this chapter, signals our family’s removal to Schoolhouse, Quakerfield, Bannockburn during July, 1956, as prompted by my Dad’s promotion to the headteachership of one of that nearby historic town’s two large primary schools. This shift not only provided enormous challenges to my Dad’s undoubted management skills, but also an exciting new home environment and life-styles for us all.

For example, we had a fresh religious life ahead in the Allan Church – Eldership for Dad, and, for me, Church Choir participation, Sunday-School teaching, Youth Fellowship and Badminton Club. Then, being over three miles out from Stirling increased all our needs for different modes of transport. I was able to exploit a free bus pass for getting to and from the High School where I had opted for advanced studies in Class 6. Elizabeth bought a Vespa motor-scooter to ease journeys, not only for her florist work in town, but also for her demanding commitments as a Ranger in the Girl Guides and team tennis playing at Stirling Municipal. My Raleigh ‘Lenton’ racing type bicycle continued to allow me (energetic!) ease of access to my pursuit of cricket and tennis, but I was also given occasional use of the ‘L’ plated Vespa when it was not required by my sister.

The schoolhouse overlooked the busy town thoroughfare, and was totally integrated into one block of the three separate teaching facilities spread out over the approximately five acres of the primary school grounds. There, instead of having only one cleaning lady, but no janitor, when at Cambusbarron, Dad inherited a janitor and at least three cleaners. As mum decided to return to full-time infant teaching in the school, one of these lady cleaners, Mrs McQue, soon became part of our family. On week-days she not only was our cook and char-lady from after breakfast time onwards, but as importantly, at least to me, she also developed into another ‘auntie’ who spoiled me with kindness all my happy days in that house until my leaving in 1963 to set-up home in Torbrex, Stirling with my then recently gained wife, Olive.

However, back to Class 6 days at school in 1956/57 and yet another busy year of study and extra-curricular activity:

On reflection, it is nigh well impossible to single out the greatest blessing among so many that made that last year at the School on the Rock’ so wonderful. But collectively the hallmark ‘FRIENDSHIP’ undoubtedly sums up my lasting impressions of these days.

Academically the pressures to some extent were off as sufficient Highers’ successes rewarded us sixth formers with a slight breathing space to voluntarily pursue preparatory studies for the following year’s chosen university degree courses that were known to assume as starting points the equivalent of Advanced GCE Level abilities as defined in the English Educational System, but not in the uniquely Scottish one. However, some of my thirty-five (a record number then for our school) fellow ‘senior citizens’, also studied for additional Highers in subjects previously unavailable, or unmanageable, in the Year 4 and 5 timetabling of options.

I chose a slightly different route because of my special interest in, and aptitude for, Mathematics and Physics. This involved my studying for the only three available advanced certificates in the 1950s in Scotland, namely, Analysis, Dynamics and Geometry. Non-examinable courses in Practical Chemistry and other aspects of Physics were offered and thus taken by me too. The counter-balance to all this scientific bias, was provided by extension courses that I attended in English Language and Literature. Any further gaps in one's timetable could be filled by attending other classes being taken by Year 4 and 5 pupils as permitted by the Principal Teacher of the relevant subject. I thus indulged my other 'addiction' – Physical Education – where exciting opportunities to be a 'pupil-teacher' also emerged for those with recognised ability to make acceptable contributions. By dint of my undoubted commitment to sport, as well as my confident out-going personality, I was given many such chances during the year by my supervising mentor, Mr Dawson Lambert.



Dawson Lambert DPE

My particular group of close school friends in this special group of senior pupils, many holding key leadership roles in the administrative and recreational aspects of school life delegated to them on a staff-consultative basis, arose from our common interests, recreationally or academically. And indeed many of these associations, thus formed, lasted through our university or college days, and a few of us remain in touch today, despite our career paths having taken us far apart, both in the UK and abroad,.

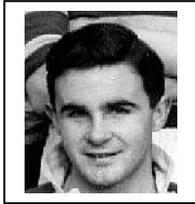
Another type of previously undreamt-of friendship also blossomed during this year. The more certain teachers treated us as adults instead of as children, and, despite an age and status gap always being present, the more our respectful acquaintanceships' rapport became assuring comradeship. As I see it now, after thirty five years as a teacher myself, I hope that what I have just written about such caring and sensitive teachers may one day also be said of me. These special teacher friends during Class 6 set me an example, the precepts of which I not only quickly learned to value during my professional life, but also tried to implement to the full.

It would be unfair to name such staff here as I would be bound to miss someone out. But my closest peer-group friends were mostly those who every other Friday night, except my friends who were attending Scouts then, caused their mothers to put on a supper spread that allowed us to 'natter', listen to music, gorge ourselves on cakes and biscuits and quaff umpteen splits of lemonade and cups of tea.

In due course all this ended, when less than unanimous decisions were reached to join up with the girls' group who had been enjoying similar single-sex get-togethers as us. Such 'parties' as they were called, had a lot to answer for !

Anyway, here are some photographs of my best pals:

Doctor



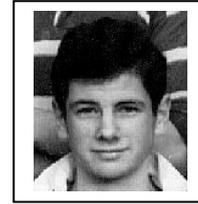
Jim Watson MB ChB

Headmaster



Alistair Johnston BSc

University Lecturer



Ken Marshall BDS

Engineer



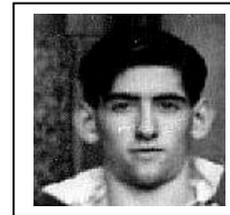
Jimmy Bremner BSc

Engineer



Ian Waller BSc

Engineer



Eric Sanderson BSc