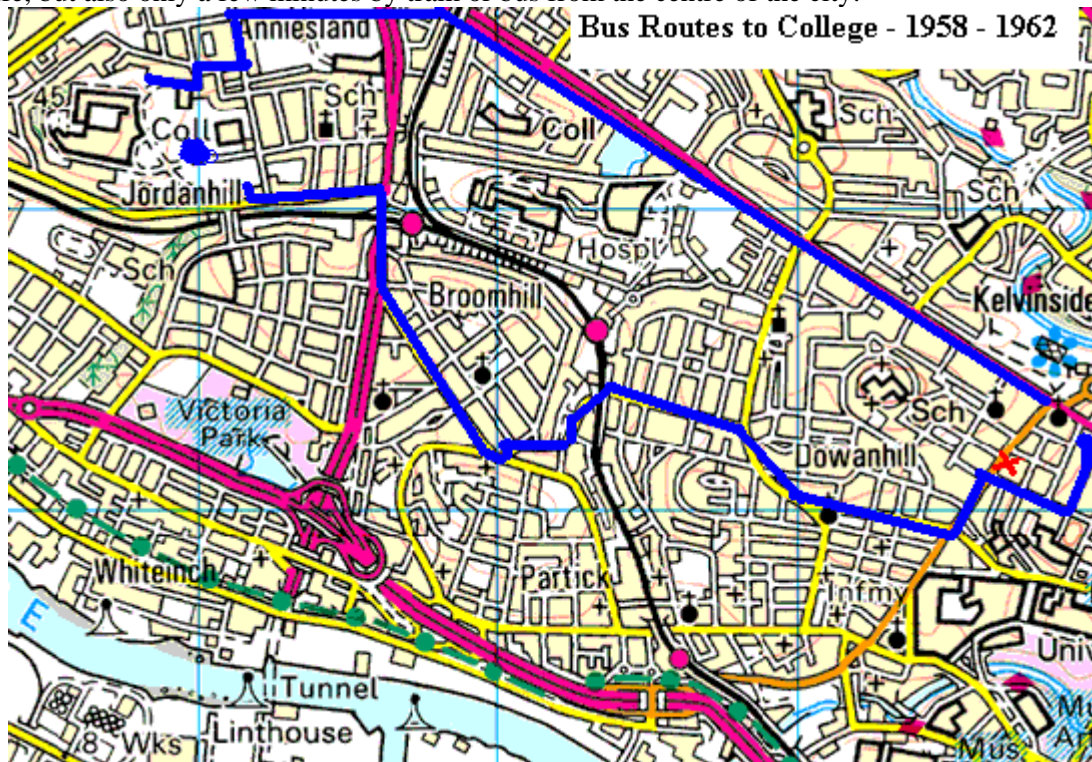


Chapter 44
1958 – 1961
Bannockburn / Jordanhill College (iii)

Jordanhill College, within its grounds, provided two hostels, Douglas and Graham, for a small number of its approximately one thousand women students, but none for men. Thus, we of the SSPE who were too far from our family homes to travel daily from there to college, traditionally opted for ‘digs’ in pairs, or ‘flats’ in larger groupings, around the Byers Road/Botanic Gardens area that also housed many Glasgow University students. For my first year, I teamed up with one of my pals from our Stirling schooldays, Alistair Johnston, who was entering his second year at ‘varsity. Our ‘digs’, in an unrelated Mrs Johnston’s home above Garden’s Café in Byers Road, just up from the Hillhead Subway Station, provided us with breakfast and evening ‘high tea’, a shared bedroom, and private access to a heated living room for study and social purposes – all for less than £5 per week each! The location was not too handy for getting to college, [as can be seen in the map below – x marks our digs] but it was not only at the hub of student social life, but also only a few minutes by tram or bus from the centre of the city.



During the excitement and fatigue of that first term of physical exertion, it seemed natural to try to find enough energy in the evenings to relax with newly made friends, including those of the opposite sex. And as you will have gathered, there were plenty of ladies to ‘chat-up’, either at lunch times between lectures, or at regular ‘hops’ arranged in either Douglas or Graham House.

As it happened, it was in the refectory queue in October 1958 that I first spotted, Olive, the girl who was some five years later to become my wife! But from our eventual first date in January 1959, that outcome was by no means predictable, far less a foregone conclusion! I must admit that I was a dreadful flirt, but, being a naïve, harmless kind of fellow, I tended to ‘play the field’ with ease and without ever too much rancour during and after frequent new liaisons and their inevitable partings over the years, up until in April, 1961 when I eventually ‘popped the question’, and was accepted!



Olive Margaret Dale in June, 1959

However, in-college commitments, colleague friendships and week-end rugby were never compromised by my ‘daffin’ wi’ quines’. These collegiate friendships, and the elements of rivalry amongst us all during the working day, became healthy and helpful aspects of all our developing professionalisms. As I look back at photographs of some of the people involved, I note, not only feelings of admiration and respect, but also boundless gratitude to so many for their encouragement and ‘brotherly’ comradeship. In this family sense too, I among many others, looked on our tutors as ‘firm but friendly’ surrogate parents. And ‘firm but friendly’ and ‘encouragement’ certainly became my priority ‘watch-words’ in all my interactions, not only then as a student teacher, but also throughout my subsequent career as a teacher.

Mr Roy Small (left) and Mr Hugh Brown, (right) with JTC Association Football Club -1958-59



Quite naturally, my initial acquaintances and mentors came from fellow rugby club members pictured above. But it is somewhat ironic that the person who became my closest friend and ‘best man’, Struan McCallum, does not feature here or in the rugby club photograph either – he played hockey during Year 1! But, due to his exceptional performances in inter-year rugby matches, he was persuaded by ‘Dickie’ and ‘Wee George’ to turn his talents loose the following year with oval ball and scrummaging instead. This was totally vindicated as he went on, after a lengthy apprenticeship, not only to represent Glasgow for many years, but also to captain Scotland ‘B’.



Struan McCallum in 5 Hillhead Street Flat in 1961

My choice of this photograph is no accident because it illustrates another of his many talents, and one that I was fortunate enough to experience daily during our three years of flat sharing. He was, and still is today, a superb classical and folk guitarist, and a baritone with hypnotic timbre in delivery.