

Chapter 62

1961 – 1962 - Jordanhill College

In late September, 1961, Struan and I returned to 5 Hillhead Street, Glasgow to live in our shared flat there where we were joined for our post-graduate year by three younger SSPE students, Dougie Gifford, Andy Beath and ... Ian McLauchlan who was later to become famous, not only as 'Mighty Mouse' in the British Lions' very successful rugby tours in New Zealand in 1971 and South Africa in 1974, but also as a highly respected Captain of Scotland for many seasons thereafter.

Meanwhile, in late August, my future wife Olive started her teaching career at Provanmill Primary School, Easterhouse, Glasgow.



There she had a severe baptism in the profession when allocated a large class of thirty-eight pupils aged eleven to twelve years of age. Much to the surprise of her more experienced colleagues, but not to me (!), she took this 'imposition' in her stride, and indeed commented in later years that her success at that point so boosted her confidence that no challenges in her subsequent career, especially in terms of maintaining discipline and respect, seemed too difficult to deal with effectively.

Among fellow former SSPE peers joining Struan and myself for our year's course of preparation for General Subjects teaching in Primary Schools were our close friends, Ian Baptie, Ron Marshall, Frank Mitchell and Tom Robertson ... and no one could have wished for finer companions in our sharing of, not only academic problems, but also, more significantly, the busy sporting and social lives we continued to enjoy. However, I had been offered the additional challenge of combining this course with the taking of a certificate in Secondary School Mathematics. Regrettably, as mathematics took up about one third of my training time in the year, it meant that I had to miss out on all in-college lectures and practical simulations related to primary aesthetic subject training and environmental studies. Thus, what I was faced with in these directions during teaching placements in schools had to be self-taught ... not ideal as I was to discover much later when primary school teaching became the focus of my career.

Socially, apart from our various romantic attachments, all of our small former SSPE group (affectionately dubbed S4 by the staff of the PE School) were music-lovers – ‘music-hall’ singing, with Ron at the piano, in any spare music-classroom we could find at lunch-times – ‘folk-song’ singing in the college tea-bar with Struan and Tom on their guitars during other free periods ... unforgettable experiences, so important as relaxation away from things academic. On the sporting front, Ian, Struan and I were still fully committed to helping put Jordanhill College on the map as a top class rugby club. Ian became Club Captain and me, Vice-Captain. Thus, as an integral part of each Monday’s selection committee, we became even more closely involved with the contributions and expectations of our rugby mentors, Messrs Bill Dickinson and George Orr ... another great experience that I was later to value when I retired in 1970 from playing and joined the administrative ranks of Stirling County Rugby Football Club.

The Jordanhill Fixture Card for the 1961-62 Season reflects our relative success –

30 matches – 25 victories – 1 draw – 4 defeats. I played in 28 matches, scoring 164 points But you may note that after a real thrashing at the hands of the champions, Hawick, on January 6, 1962, I was ‘dropped’ from the side for two weeks I was crestfallen, but not down-hearted, because my humbling at Hawick had been at the hands (and twinkling-feet) of seasoned Scottish internationalist, George Stevenson. Anyway, I knew (!) that the team needed ‘the Boot’ (as I was called) and thus my return was not long delayed!



On the professional front in Term I, both Struan and I had successful experiences on our five week placement in Broomhill Primary School near the College. Our tutor, Mr JPR Hunter (who had known me as a boy when visiting my dad's school in Banknock in the 1940s) was most helpful with constructive criticism during his visits to our classrooms. He clearly realised that we, as students who had previously obtained merit passes in the teaching of PE, would have few, if any, problems with discipline, and thus concentrated on our presentation skills in teaching Arithmetic, English, Geography lessons and the like. On the academic front, Psychology and Education examinations before Christmas were passed with reasonable grades. But with my studies in Maths. calling for ongoing searching for ideas and resources to illustrate my "Mathematics in the News" project to be submitted for assessment in April, I must admit that that Christmas break was no real holiday for me. The idea was to 'write your own maths.textbook material' by exploiting newspaper pictures, advertisements, tables etc. It was a great challenge. But I saw beyond the theoretical aspects of the assignment in that, by selecting from among the fifty or so ideas that I developed and wrote-up from the hundreds of newspapers that everyone in the family hoarded for me, I also proved the viability of three of these when visited by evaluating tutors on my two five week placements in Hamilton Crescent JS and Allan Glen's SS schools respectively. These pleased the tutors so much, including the Head of Department, Mr Sillitoe, that I eventually received an A grade for both the project and my teaching.

For the record, I devised lessons on - %'s of advertisements in different kinds of newspapers i.e. tabloids and quality – circumference of circles as applied to an athletics' track, and, in particular, 'staggered' starts in its 'lanes' – (and for Mr Sillitoe) the trigonometry of shooting at a soccer goal from various distances and angles in relation to the movements of the goalkeeper and the dimensions of the goal itself.

The apparent irony of this last was not lost on Mr Sillitoe while congratulating me on the lesson's novelty. He commented, "You do realise, Mr Henderson, that Allan Glen's is a rugby playing school and not a soccer one?" However, I was ready for this remark from my knowledge of many of the pupils' interests and extra-curricular sporting accomplishments apart from in rugby. So I replied, "There are many soccer supporters here in class; and indeed three of the lads over there have already signed youth professional soccer forms for Rangers, Celtic and Partick Thistle respectively!" Mr Sillitoe was duly impressed.