

## Chapter 64

1962 -1963

### First Year of Teaching *continued* The High School of Stirling

Friendship and thus support from colleagues in teaching tends to play a large part in you gaining job satisfaction from daily interactions with pupils. Certainly you are on your own when the classroom door closes and ‘battle’ commences. But survival and maintenance of rapport during your delivery of interesting and worthwhile lessons is often greatly aided by those in the staffroom who are willing to pass on their experience and subject expertise as well as previous knowledge of many of the pupils with whom you are currently dealing.

I was not only fortunate in this regard with my immediate colleagues in the Mathematics and Physical Education Departments, but also with many from other disciplines – and in particular, and most gratifyingly, from my former teachers at the school from 1951 to 1957, who were still in harness, like, for example, the Deputy Rector, my old English teacher, **Mr Charles Strachan**; Chemistry teacher, **Mr ‘Tim’ Morrison**; Latin teachers, **Messrs Jimmy Murray** and **Ian Sinclair**; Geography teacher, **Mr David Brown**; and back in the PE Department, **Mr Dawson Lambert** and **Miss Molly Symington** .... of whom Charles, Jimmy and Molly had indeed been colleagues of my Dad in the 1930s up at the old School on the Rock.

**Mr Tom McIntyre**, my head of department for the Maths. half of my work was a superb leader, guide and informant. PE Head of Department Molly, and also Dawson, **Duncan McCallum** (from my college cohort), **Margaret Gray** and **Frances Monfriess** were my fellow members on the sports side of things, and together we shared the challenges of teaching gymnastics, basketball, netball and dance to seldom completely interested and capable classes of pupils! The contrast when it came to our duties in the swimming pool was marked. There at least 99.9 % of pupils were highly motivated and excited ... and the willingness of non-swimmers to learn became a facet that we as teachers found to be even more rewarding than our engagement in stroke-improvement and life-saving skills with the rest.

**Charlie Smith**, also Maths., became a great friend. We not only shared interests in tennis, badminton, rugby and music, but he also happened to be married to a former school pal of my sister Elizabeth and myself, Mary Cochrane. Again, one who soon came into this category of friendship was **Andrew Miller** of the English Department. Among Andy’s attributes were his gentlemanliness, modesty, poetic genius, great willingness to participate in school sport, and ... the great forbearance he showed in due course when putting up with me as his team-tennis partner as 3<sup>rd</sup> couple at Livilands LTC! ..... We three - Andy, Charlie and John – shared so much during the school day - not only brief staffroom chats at coffee-break times and lengthy ‘putting the world to rights’ discussions on bad-weather days and every Friday after 4pm, but also deep commitment to rugby football for the good of the boys. They were my seniors by a few

years, but, none-the-less, we gelled as a trio which displayed surprising compatibilities when one considered the very different social backgrounds of each member's upbringing.

My duties as Master i/c Rugby Football and Games Master not only brought me into close contact with those from other departments who had roles to play during afternoon games-periods, but also with the older and less-physically able staff who I had to cajole into volunteering to travel with away teams each Saturday morning. Essential relaxation with lunch-time badminton in the gymnasium with a small but varied group of staff brought more friendships and this was yet another pleasant interlude in the daily round. The co-operation given by everyone thus involved, and the comradeships that developed thereby, added so many happy dimensions to my baptism and integration into the profession.

Two other special friends I made at this time, were ..... **from the school staff**, the slightly eccentric sports enthusiast extraordinaire, **Ian Millar** of the Biology Department, and **from Stirling County RFC**, then a prop-forward and schoolboy-level referee, **Dr Fred Parker**, a research chemist at British Hydro-Carbons in Grangemouth, about whom much more will be related in later chapters.

**Ian**, a product of Madras College, St. Andrews, loved to talk ... non-stop .... But his pupils, if not always his busy colleagues, loved him for his idiosyncratic and caring ways. He volunteered to look after the rugby 'also-rans' of the senior school and thus teamed-up with me in actual fact to help me nurture the 'prima-donna' players in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV as well. His contributions were invaluable. He noticed things about my lads that I would certainly have missed and such oversights would have prevented my making full use of their capabilities for the good of the team. I liked the man and will never forget his kindnesses and enthusiasm.

