

JAMES R ALLAN

Sadly I now play golf like an old man. Can't understand why!! (Also see insert)

GILLIAN BEVERIDGE

MRS L D PAMELA BRAID (Gibson)

Thank you for another very interesting magazine. I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend the Biennial Dinner. From the photos, I see that I would have met several friends from the war years at G.G.S.

BRUCE BAIN

MAIRI BLAIR (Fraser)

IAIN C BURGESS

I regret to inform you that my aunt, Mrs Jean Lugg (nee Burgess) passed away on 21 December 2001, aged 92. She died peacefully in her sleep after a short illness. She will be greatly missed by her family and by her many friends in Stranraer, in Grantown and indeed around the world.

ROSEMARY M.CHARLISH (Masson)

Still enjoying flying up and down the country with Eastern Airways. Have recently been to Norway on a charter flight. The scenery was beautiful. Thoroughly enjoyed my brother Ian and Samantha's wedding and meeting up with everyone.

ALISON CLARK (Ronaldson)

Sincere thanks to all F.P.'s who gave us support during Jessie's difficult illness and their sympathy last October at our loss of a dear sister. Michael and his family and Graeme and I appreciated this very much. Our sympathy and thoughts are with other F.P.'s who have suffered bereavement recently.

MARK M CLARK

Failed miserably to reply last year as we moved to Murthly on Boxing Day 2000. Now 13 years with CSC, having changed roles to commercial director. Andrew started the local school in August 2001 (32 pupils in total) and thinks "it's fantastic". Jenni continues to cause havoc in rural Perthshire (aged 3). Enjoyed a recent work tour to South Africa. (Marianne called it a jolly)

WILMA COWAN (Irving)

Nearly forgot again to return the slip. Family well scattered. Oldest son in the army is in Bosnia for 6 months and second son in RAF goes to Kosovo in June for 4 months. Youngest son lives round the corner from us so at least we see part of the family on a regular basis. We take his three girls to a caravan in Ayr for a week at half term. We may need another holiday at the end to recover!!!

MARGARET CROPP (Templeton)

I do enjoy getting all the Grantown news through Betty. I could amuse the F.P. Reunion with recordings of some of our telephone conversations.

Between Betty and the magazine, it delights me to know how many of my school friends are enjoying their 80's with me, Grantown district must have been a healthy place to grow up in.

My greetings to Patrick (our lawyer) to Frank (I recall climbing those Munro hills. Remember cycling, hiking and following the cairns up Cairngorm? In recent years we motored to Loch Morlich and went up a ski lift!) To Ian (did you ever do your own maths exercise?) To Margaret for whose good health I claim responsibility. I persuaded her to practise for the hockey team after school. Her grandson did not get his amazing athletic ability from her! To Winnie (my special Ginger Twin) – we were born on the same day and each had ginger hair. She was a fine musician. All the memories brought up of V and VI! Mr Hunter was very proud at the record number of Highers we passed. Vera, Meta, Duncan, Phyllis, Beatrice, Mabel and so on. Tom, his son, was our acknowledged best scholar, and very popular with all of us. Popularity, great teaching and real fun goes to Bertie Wilson who, with the boys at the school created “The Old Guard”. He made us like Latin – he included incidental history of Rome and Greece – for which I owe my added enjoyment of my visits to these ancient sights.

Mr MacKenzie (Mac) was a joy to us for he came as a very young teacher to guide us through Higher French. The girls liked making him blush as he was only a few years older than us. However he turned the tables on us by asking each of us to dance with him at the School Dance and he became our real friend. And so it goes on. I have travelled (and lived) all over the world but G.G.S. and “Age pro Viribus” are the foundations of our lives. I love coming back. I am proud to be “one of the Templetons of The Lodge” to have been captain (along with Hamish in his time) of Revack. We were the BEST – THE REVACK TEAMS!

P.S. I hope to have lunch with Mina Keith (Ritson) She lives very close to this lovely seaside town in beautiful British Columbia – the hills are as beautiful but a little larger than our Cairngorms. The rivers likewise reminds

us of the Spey – larger but as beautiful. The Fraser in whose valley we live flows into the bay north of us.

SHIRLEY A FINDLAY (Masson)

JANE A (NANCY) FORSYTH (Gray)

Have just completed a booklet “Tatties & Skirlie” started over 20 years ago – because the grandchildren kept asking “Granny, tell us about the time you? – it contains quite a bit about my Grantown days – with photos. Got as far as my first twenty-one years (the next forty-nine are more exciting and intriguing) but I’d better get my skates on – can’t wait another twenty years! Still opening garden to public twice a year – monies go to local charities. A tree we discovered while walking guide dogs has been accepted in the Heritage Trees of Scotland. We were “peaceful” protesters against the GM crops at Munloch. My sister Patsy lost her husband this year, the first bereavement in my siblings’ family. Booked by Saltire Society to take them up Crimonde Hill and tell them the story of Andrew de Moray.

ELSPETH M FRASER (Mitchell)

Our 6th grandson arrived in March, so now our three sons have each got two boys, surely a guarantee the Fraser line should be continued. Our daughter, married to a farmer, has two girls – both are in secondary school in Inverness.

MARLENE A FRASER (McWilliam)

Allan and I are enjoying our retirement 6 years on. We managed up to Grantown-on-Spey five times in 2001. At Easter we had a lovely evening at Iain and Joan (Fraser) Smith, Lentrane. They also invited Anne Knight, (Grant, Revack) and her husband Geoff along to join us. What a super night – the blethers! Now it’s May 2002 and we’re on our second visit. The weather has been perfect.

MRS JOHN GRANT (M E Templeton)

We were delighted to have a visit from Grace Kirk and to catch up on all news. Pleased to learn Grace’s sister, Elise (Mrs Geoffrey Selman) is recovering well from a recent operation. We had a lovely holiday in Majorca in June. We still walk almost daily, have a large garden which keeps us well occupied, as do our grandchildren who visit frequently.

SALLY N GREENLEES (Grant)

We plan to move back to Grantown in the near future, hopefully before the twins start school in 2003. Looking forward to being back in Strathspey very much.

MRS VINCENT GREENWOOD (Mary I Winchester)

Nothing to report.

MRS P.A.M. HIGGINS (Pam MacPherson)

I have received a lovely letter from (Herbert) John Wright in Canada, in response to my Dad's obituary in the last magazine, together with a photograph of a group of scouts and my Dad (Peter MacPherson) as Scoutmaster. The occasion was the winning of the championship at a Jamboree attended by Scouts from all over the N.E. of Scotland and bringing the winning pennant back to Grantown. The others in the photograph are Donald MacBeth, Iain McIntosh, George Catto, Hugh Tulloch, John Wishart Milne, ex Provost Glass, John Riddell, Sandy Ledingham and H J Wright. Another testament to what a wonderful publication the G.G.S. Magazine is, keeping F.P.'s in touch with their roots over so many years, only now being emulated by a well known website! 2002 heralds a new dawn for us, as I intend to retire this summer. Once freed from the shackles of teaching, we are looking forward to a vagabond life with caravan, following the Championship Show trail up and down the country with our Border Terriers; and also having more time to enjoy the beautiful Peak District countryside where we live. We are looking forward to making a sentimental journey to Grantown, and to my birthplace on the Isle of Lewis, in September. Who knows, I might even make it to an F.P. Dinner at long last, after 40 years as an exile. Keep up the good work; every year when the magazine pops through the letterbox, I down tools for the next couple of hours and have a good read, transported back to the perfect place to spend a childhood.

MRS JEAN HOGG (Cruickshank)

My son Brian doing remedial teaching in Glasgow. Enjoy visits from the grandchildren. Also kept busy with committee work.

KATHARINE G LAING (Templeton)

RGN. SCM. BSc, Midwifery. Nothing new to report.

KAREN LOW

I have just arrived back in Grantown (it's March 2002) for a few days and have just seen the F.P. Magazine 2001 and realised how quickly the time flies by that I didn't have time to fill in the 2001 form! Not much new to report, most of my free time and holidays are spent renovating our house we bought three years ago in Grindelwald, and of course there is a large garden which also needs looking after. We also get lots of visitors so I am normally always kept busy! I noticed my brother and sister are also not so good writers, so I have enclosed their new addresses. (Thank you Karen)

IAN D MASSON

Took the plunge and got married to Samantha in June. Thoroughly enjoyed the day with all our families and friends attending and Guard of Honour by the Atholl Highlanders. My Uncle Ian and Aunt Nancy came over from Sierra Leone to be with us.

Have gone into business by buying over the East Calder Garage, now under the name of Grantown Garage Ltd.

MARGARET J MASSON (Stuart)

A busy year. In February I visited my brother Ian and his wife Nancy in Sierra Leone. This is a beautiful country and after the devastation of civil war is trying to get back to some normality. On landing at Lungi Airport you then have to take a short helicopter flight into Freetown. Quite daunting for someone like me who has never been on a helicopter. I travelled to the border of Guinea with Ian on one of his business trips. This took about five hours on a very rocky road – most of the roads had been destroyed by the rebels. A visit to the war orphans sports day was an experience not to be missed. The children were so excited and as it was the Harmatin season we ended up covered in red dust from the Sahara. (See article by Ian Stuart). There are quite a number of British named places, including Aberdeen. The weather was absolutely great, sunshine all day, which is one of the reasons I am going back there hopefully in November!

The other big event of the year was my son Ian's marriage in June to Samantha. They were married in Inverallan Church with the reception in a marquee in the grounds of the Coppice Hotel. The weather was kind to us and we had a wonderful day with all the family and friends attending.

DENISE MITCHELL (Grant)

Still in Letham, near Forfar. The newest addition to the family, Rhian, was born on 23rd May 2002. Her two sisters adore her and are great little helpers. Our eldest daughter Alyssa starts school after the summer and Niamh starts playgroup.

ELIZABETH D MUTCH

Had a very happy 90th birthday in July 2001. All my nearest and dearest visited me during that time. Otherwise there is nothing to report.

ELIZABETH M McCLELLAND (Lawrence)

Nothing to report

ALISON McCONACHIE (Grant)

Still Staff Nurse/Community Nurse at Inch War Memorial Hospital. Hectic after school activity schedule – no free time beyond looking after children.

GORDON McCONACHIE

Still with Scottish Executive in Inverurie – been using GPS equipment all summer measuring field areas. North-East area Union Representative for PROSPECT (Civil Service Union) trying to ease conflict between staff. No time for golf except when son wants to play – he is a keen golfer and senior rugby team member in school. Treasurer of local Gala – what fun counting all that money!!! Chief cattle steward at Grantown Show organising all exhibitions etc.

JAMES MacDONALD

Leaving these shores for the worst of the winter is becoming a habit. On 4th January we left Southampton for Madeira then across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, calling at Barbados, Grenada and Curacao before entering the Panama Canal and on to Guatamola, Mexico and S.F. Then across the Pacific making one or two calls and then New Zealand where we spent two marvellous weeks touring both North and South Islands. Then home via Bangkok – phew! Home in time to see the Spring in England. Only regret – we lost a day crossing the International Dateline.

WILMA MacDONALD (Watt)

Have had Davis, Jimmy and his wife Barbara over for a very hectic 5 weeks. They really enjoyed S.A.'s winter sunshine and saw a great deal of the country. We drove 1,000 miles down to Cape Town in the south west, through the Karoo where the scenery never changed for hours. In the sunshine we went up Table Mountain and took a boat trip to President Mandella's prison on Robber Island. We then had more Scots fare than Jimmy gets in England watching my grandson compete in the freezing cold with Bevoni High Pipe Band. We did a three hour tour of the Cheetah Farm outside Pretoria and Gold Reef City outside Johannesburg and to top it off went north east to Kruyer National Park, where they were lucky enough to see the Big Five in one day, which most people don't see in MANY visits. It was hectic, but a wonderful five weeks for us all and I know they'll be back.. Anyone else?!

DONALD McINTYRE

Living now in the centre of Perth where we can survive with minimum driving. Receiving many old friends visiting Scotland – former colleagues and students. This afternoon two Chinese seismologists are arriving – their father was a fellow student with me in Edinburgh. Still busy in computing

circles and giving geological talks. Keep in close touch with my brother, Ranald. e-mail: ... web site: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com.uk>

IRIS McINTOSH (Forbes)

Apologies for not sending back my slip last spring but my husband was in the process of selling his pharmacy and we just seemed to be on a roller coaster from October 2000 till April 2001 when Harry finally became a gentleman of leisure. Having been a member of the retired fraternity for almost four years myself I was not too sure how I would react to having him “under my feet” all day every day but we have almost cracked it now – eleven months down the line! Our son Stuart was married on 25th August 2001 – a wonderful day and the sun even put “his hat on” that day – one of the few occasions during the summer (?) Saturdays of 2001. We had our retirement holiday to Las Vegas late November – quite an experience but we did not arrive home any richer than we had left. Christmas Day 2001 was my mum’s 90th birthday and she thoroughly enjoyed having her family around her – Fiona, her husband and two little boys, Alistair (4) and Ross (2) were able to be here along with some of our close friends whom Mum considers her extended family. Life continues to be very busy – we’re both members of WRVS and Wave Radio (Dr Grays Hospital radio service). Harry does a few locums and I teach from time to time in a relief capacity. There’s also the dog to walk, a garden to attend to etc. etc.

RANALD McINTYRE

Still busy with computer use for internet. Family trees, history, general information. Collection of sayings and verses on my website: <http://www.electricscotland.com/friends/donaldfindex.htm> e-mail now:Ranald@McIntyre.me.uk Joined the schools website, but think I am too old as no classmate names shown – oh dear!

MRS DONALD A McLEOD (Elizabeth R MacGregor)

Enjoying a busy retirement with gardening occupying most of our time.

HELEN McLURE (Gordon)

I haven’t returned my “slip” for two years – how time flies – but have the excuse of having moved myself, one husband, two children + two cats via two rented houses before finally moving into our current house last June. Despite a stressful 18 months we are now happily settled into Cambridge life. The children, Alex (7) and Charlotte (5), quickly threw away stabilisers to join scores of other children cycling to school, and are settling in well. I am still working part-time for Boots – in Cambridge – now term-time only, so looking forward to six weeks holiday in the summer!

MARGARET OLLASON (MacDonald)

Enjoying the magazine as always. Thank you. Good news from Seattle – great grandson Samuel James Ollason born 5th March to my grandson David and his wife Tracey. He looks beautiful! Hoping to visit Nethy Bridge sometime this year and looking forward to holidaying in south of France in July.

ISOBEL ORFORD (Calder)

No news of interest to report.

PHILLIPA PARSEY

I am in accountancy back in Yorkshire. My interests have dwindled to activities based around occupying my twin teenage boys (alias Kevin and Perry)

SUSAN (Grant) & DUNCAN RILEY

One year married and all going well. Duncan's business is going well and he has taken up golf again. My two sons are doing well at school and kept busy with golf and football too.

DAPHNE RITCHIE (Duncan)

Usual, I'm afraid. Golfing, teaching, keeping the house and garden reasonably tidy, keeping the husband fed and watered, spending too much time on the computer and helping Dianne and Hugh to move house (twice in 12 months). Spent a few days golfing in Normandy in April. Beautiful courses – we played Deauville, Etretat and Jumieges and had lovely sunny weather. There was blossom everywhere, only about 6 weeks earlier than in Grantown! We stayed with a distant cousin, one of Bobby Mutch's daughters, Madeleine, who has lived in Paris for 27 years and has started playing golf at a driving range in the middle of the Bois de Boulonge. Madeleine has fond memories of being in Grantown for her holidays when she was 8 (nearly 50 years ago), staying at 28 High Street and being driven about by Bill Duncan in his Samson.

WILLIAMINA RITSON (Keith)

Attended the wedding of our grandson Colin. Still enjoying our great grandson, Braeden who is now a lively 2 year old. Had a long chat with Marr Illingworth recently who always keeps in touch. Always happy to receive letters from my long time friend Margaret Ollason. As I write this on January 24th I am looking out to a winter wonderland. There must be 6 inches of snow and the trees and bushes are laden down with the weight of it – such unusual weather for this part of the country. Grateful that Myles and I

are always able to be out and about – weather permitting – and considering Myles had two heart attacks last year. Best wishes to all F.P.'s.

MARGARET ROSS (

Once more an exciting year for the Ross Clan.

Family One – Gill's

Craig once more delighted us with his exploits – being chosen to head the Scot's Team at the Commonwealth Games bearing the Saltire and succeeding in gaining a Bronze Medal despite having broken his collar bone racing in Japan earlier in the year, then further achieving the coveted Gold Medal in the "World's" in Denmark in October.

Family Two – Johnnie's

Nikki has decided on a further year teaching Maths to the Chinese. New flat nearer school and friends, hoping for a visit from Dad and Calum in February. Calum still with Monarch of the Glen learning to be an editor but shortly to make for the south for further experience

Family Three – Chay's

Chay and Jackie have just become young grand parents, Zoe having produced a replica of herself in October. (She and Stewart live in Strathpeffer). The wee brothers are delighted to be uncles and their Granny equally delighted to be a Great Granny again adding Charley to Vikki's highly entertaining Hannah. Life is never dull!

PATRICIA H ROSS (MacDonald)

No news at this time. Hope to be in Grantown about the end of September.

MRS CONSTANCE P SHAW (Gordon)

Bank Officer retired. I enjoy reading the F.P. magazine very much and especially reading about my classmates at school and also my teachers. Miss Legge, Miss Alanach and Thomas Hunter, our dedicated Head Teacher to whom I owe much of my success in my long banking career. I paid a short visit to Grantown last August but couldn't visit anyone. Best wishes to all F.P.'s.

J.G.F.SMITH

Sorry not to have been in contact for a couple of years! I'm still running Vibtech, my company set up to develop a new seismic survey system for land oil and gas exploration. Hope to launch the system in the autumn. Looks like we will manage to raise the funds despite the downturn in the technology sector financial markets. We celebrated the birth of our first son (Peter) who was born on the last day of the millennium (for those of us who can count, that is 31/12/00). He is named after his great, great grandfather, Peter Grant who was school master at Kincaig and is buried in Alvie

Churchyard. I'm still in regular touch with David Wilson – we are godfathers to our respective first borns. Kareen and I are often in Grantown visiting the Kirkwood clan at Culfoichmore and enjoy bumping into familiar faces (especially when they don't recognise you!) Have made good use of the friendsreunited.co.uk website and see a growing band of G.G.S. F.P.'s represented. As a suggestion – can we please do these returns by e-mail – it would make the editor's job easier too!

MRS I SPALDING (Isobel Gunn)

I had a lovely weekend in Grantown, about the middle of May, with my son Neil and daughter-in-law Hazel, who have bought Dallas Brae as a weekend holiday home. The weather was lovely and I enjoyed outings around the lovely countryside. I spent a most enjoyable afternoon with Betty and John Grant, Glencairn. Betty and I chatted for ages, about school days, family news and local news etc. John meantime was busy in their garden cutting the grass etc. He was quite ready for a break when Betty produced a lovely afternoon tea and we all had another good chat. Hazel and Neil were spending the afternoon cycling around the woods. I did call on Margaret Cruickshank, Hazelbank who lives two doors down from Dallas Brae. She keeps well. Her brother Willie was in my class in school. I went to church that Sunday and met up with Mrs Logie on the way, and on entering the church recognised Peter Taylor and had a word with him. I caught a glimpse of Jean Hogg (Cruickshank) on her way out but no sign of her outside. I look forward to the F.P. Magazine with all the news and it was a lovely surprise seeing all the "kent" faces in the photographs. I'm sorry I haven't been able to attend an F.P. Dinner these past few years and long may it continue. I have been given a date for knee surgery in June, I trust it will take away the pain I suffer, God willing.

THOMAS B STUART

Nothing of interest to report. Looking forward to a visit north in the summer and some golf at Grantown. I find it intriguing to look across from the second hole to see the old cottage hospital where I was born over 70 years ago. There is an interesting story there, but I will save that for next year.

MARJORY TAYLOR (Cattanach)

It's May – and - we have just returned to chilly, damp Seattle after spending the last four months in Arizona where the skies are blue and the sun is warm. This is the second time we have spent winter in Arizona and its really lots better to be warm. However its good to be home with children and grandchildren. Last September we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. All John's family came from Glasgow and old friends from all over the States too. We had a great time visiting, reminiscing and travelling to local

landmarks. Thank you for keeping the magazine going – and to former classmate – Margaret Ross (Broomhill) for sending it to me – the pictures were a great touch!

BILL & RITA TEMPLETON (MARSHALL)

We nearly forgot to send in our contribution for this year's mag – we seem to be always on the move. As it is we are just back from a visit to the far north – taking in a game of golf in Wick, a visit to the Castle of Mey (excellent), then a marvellous journey along the road to the west on a glorious afternoon. We reached Durness and stayed two nights. Managed to fit in a trip to the lighthouse at Cape Wrath where it was decidedly windy. Back in time last weekend to fulfil a long standing mixed foursomes date with Seonaid Vickerman – we took part in the Louise Mearns Foursomes at Abernethy Golf Club. I shall not tell you the score other than to say that we each played the same number of shots by the end of the round! If nothing else I think I played so badly that Seonaid will not ask me again to partner her! Our journeys this year have taken us to Oban again, also another trip to Ireland in May – this time to Donegal. Then we had ten days at Coldingham and managed to fit in a game at the Roxburgh course near Kelso before spending a couple of days at the Open at Muirfield. All very enjoyable but at the end of the day we are always happy to get back to dear old Nethy – what is it they say? – East, West – Home's best.

MAREE THOMPSON

I moved to Frankfurt on April 1st 2002 to be a project analyst with Standard Life Germany. I am working on a Group Pensions Project that is very new to the German Market. Having a really good time (my social life hasn't been this great since I was 17!) getting to know the locals and ex-pats. My German is getting better. Doing a wee bit of travelling around seeing some more of Germany and a bit of Europe too. Already been to Milan. Met up with Alison Cormack, Arlene Grassick, Kas Alexander, Kenneth Turnball and Elaine Harrold before I left. We also had a class reunion in December. It was really good to catch up with everyone. My brother Gareth is still in Edinburgh in his 3rd year of an English Literature and Philosophy degree at Edinburgh Uni. My mum, Kate, is still in Falkirk. Will be back in the U.K. at some point over the next two years, but if anyone has a stopover in Frankfurt and would like a tour of the Bierkellers, drop me an e-mail, Viele Grube, Tschus!

MRS T S B THOMSON (Mortimer)

Life goes on as usual with the occasional aches and pains of the “ageing process”. However I still manage to struggle around a few holes of the local golf course with the old cliché of a “Bag of Clubs” being my handicap now.

Gardening is a great source of therapy for me so at this time I look forward to the warmer days of spring when I can feel the earth in my hands. I look forward too, to my holidays in Grantown when I might see a few familiar faces – becoming less as the years go by. Many thanks to all the folk who help to keep “The Mag” alive. It is very much appreciated.

MRS ANTHONY L WICKENS (Irene M Lornie)

I have only recently found out about the existence of our Former Pupils’ Club from an old friend. Seonaid Vickerman (Grant), and I am delighted to be eligible for membership. On leaving Grantown in 1953, when the family moved to East Kilbride, I finished my education at Rutherglen Academy eventually leaving there in 1956. To join the Civil Service. After serving in Glasgow for four years I was transferred to Reading in 1960, where I eventually met my husband Tony, and settled down to life in England. In the early seventies we were lucky enough to be afforded the opportunity to see South America at first hand when Tony, who is a Chartered Engineer, was asked by his employers to take a four year assignment in Brazil. Based in San Paulo, we visited most of the other countries in South America and we were even able to go to the lost Inca city of Machu Picchu, which was a breath-taking experience. On our return to the UK in 1975 we bought a house in Bracknell and we have lived in this area since then. I re-entered the Civil Service in 1976 and served in Windsor for a number of years as an Income Tax Inspector. My last assignment in the Revenue was as Officer in Charge of the Typing and Secretarial Services for South East England, having been pulled out of a Tax District to head the Organisation and get it ready for market testing. I have now retired from the Revenue but I am still kept busy helping Tony run our own Sales and Marketing Consultancy Company. I would like to send my very best wishes to all my former classmates in my year and also to anyone else who remembers me from days gone by.

KAY ELAINE WILSON (Ross)

Still working hard, don’t have a lot of spare time with two boys to run around after. Spent Easter in Grantown which was good and caught up with all the family. Hoping to be at Findhorn in the summer again, all being well. Planning a reunion for when we hit the Big “40” so watch this space!!

Freetown, Sierra Leone Contribution by Ian Stuart

Paul is 5, we think. He has sad dark brown eyes, rarely speaks and smiles even less. He is one of 60 children in an orphanage in the east side of Freetown, Sierra Leone. All of these children have lost their parents in the 10 year brutal civil war. Some have witnessed the killing of their parents, some have become separated and do not know whether their parents are still alive or dead. They have been retrieved from the street or well-intentioned people have brought them to the home.

The orphanage is run by a local religious minister and a very small number of helpers. They have the most basic of accommodation with 4 or 5 children to a bed, 3 or 4 beds to a room. There is a basic primary school which caters for the children and other local villagers and a skills training centre for adolescent sexually abused girls who were abducted by the rebels.

Sine we arrived in Sierra Leone from Ghana nearly 2 years ago to run the Department for International Development office, my wife Nancy has spent many hours fund raising and helped organise huge improvements to the home. She is on the management committee and devotes much of her spare time to the children and staff of the home. I assist as instructed! The achievements will seem trivial compared to what our children in the UK rightly expect. For example the children now have beds, overcrowded as they are. The earth floors have been covered with concrete to cure the problem of jiggers (little parasites that burrow into the toes and feet). The roof nearly doesn't leak. There are basic long drop toilets. There is a well, which has just come into service and so on.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The children are remarkably well behaved and are receiving some basic schooling in a country with anything up to 80% illiteracy. Efforts are being made to trace relatives or even the villages they came from. We are always greeted with a welcome song when we visit the home. Little Paul usually detaches himself from the group and wants to be held either by Nancy or me throughout the visit. This is regarded as acceptable by all the other children many of whom also want some sort of contact. They just want a hand to hold. For the last two years we have sponsored the school sports. They are held on a dusty rocky incline and all the competitors are in bare feet. Big sister was a guest of honour this year and supported the Stuart (yellow – Revoan) house. Sierra Leone is at the bottom of the UN Human Development indices and may be the poorest country in the world. It has had over 10 years of civil war, peculiar in that this was caused not by ethnic, tribal or religious differences, but rather by corruption, disenchantment, bad governance and social exclusion. Families were set against each other as children were forced by the rebels to kill their parents and friends or be killed. 10 years on, in January this year, formal peace was declared, followed by reasonably free and fair elections in May.

We arrived when the war was still a reality, which meant that we were pretty much confined to Freetown for the first few months. There was a 10pm curfew at that time, strictly enforced. Gradually as things improved we started travelling to the provinces. Initially this was in convoys guarded by UN troops and armed police or by helicopter. These are the most uncomfortable Russian, noisy, metal bench-seated things with the benches longwise on either side. The tail and the centre space (gangway) were usually packed with provisions for the UN battalions. Landing consisted of hovering above a prearranged open space to make sure there were no rebels and, if clear, a quick put down with armed troops all around. It sounds very dramatic but the reality was thankfully much more mundane. Now we can drive to most places if the roads are passable. In the provinces they are a test of both vehicle and passengers. Nancy was in a very remote area not so long ago, opening a health clinic and was presented with a live goat by the paramount chief. It was not an option to refuse so there was an additional passenger in the back of the Landrover on the return journey.

Life expectancy here is in the 30s due partly to high infant mortality rates. Malaria is the biggest killer with diarrhoea diseases the next. One of the unfortunate effects of the war was the lack of immunisation. As a result there is a very high incidence of polio. The next major problem will be HIV/AIDS due to many causes, the large UN peace keeping force (17,500 soldiers), lack of literacy and very little knowledge, or use, of contraception.

On the social side, the beaches here are spectacular and would rival any in the Caribbean, where we spent a number of years. There is a golf course with browns instead of greens. Because of the usual lack of grass, preferred lies apply on the fairways. It is hardly up to Grantown standards, but it is interesting. There is quite a number of eating places of varying standard. The menus are very similar with fish as the main feature, but there are now some good Lebanese places and even a couple of Chinese, although no Indian.

We had a short visit to Grantown in the summer for nephew Ian (Masson) and Sam's wedding. The weather on the day was kind, but the rest of the time in Scotland in June was pretty miserable. We were quite happy to come back here, after a brief stopover near Seville, for the rainy season. At least the rain is warmer.

MARY ELIZABETH CRUICKSHANK DEC'D
(Contributed by relatives)

Mary was born on 25th June 1908 at the Station Cottage, Spey Bridge, Grantown-on-Spey. Her mother was Louisa Cruickshank, nee Watson, and her father was Peter Cruickshank who was the Station Master at Grantown-on-Spey, a very busy station in those days.

Mary attended the local Grammar School in Grantown-on-Spey and afterwards won a place at Edinburgh University where, in 1930, she obtained an M.A. degree. Prior to teaching she spent a year living with a family in Germany and then spent a year teaching at Grantown before going to Elgin. In 1933 she became a member of the Educational Institute of Scotland and was, at that time, teaching German and French at Elgin Academy where she remained until 1939. After the war she returned to Elgin and continued teaching there.

Mary's mother Louisa Watson had also attended Edinburgh University and won a prize medal in 1901-02 for German. She also taught languages.

Mary's maternal grandfather had been a veterinary surgeon in Edinburgh and was also a literary man who had had many poems published by newspapers such as the Hamilton Advertiser, the Carlisle Express and Examiner and the Glasgow Weekly Herald. His pet name for his daughter Louisa was Lottie and this stayed with her throughout her life and Mary and her sister Isabel always referred to their mother as Lottie.

Mary's first boyfriend was a German but the war interrupted that relationship.

Mary had been a member of the British Red Cross and was called up for Military Service in 1939. Her first posting was to the Military Hospital in Edinburgh Castle. In 1942 she was sent to the Military Hospital in Kirkwall, Orkney and in 1943 she was transferred to Blandford Camp, Dorset, then the Military Hospital, Shaftesbury. In 1944 she was sent to the British General Hospital in Ostend, Belgium. On September 5th 1945 she was, after 6 years of military service, demobbed and returned to Viewhill, Spey Bridge, her family home.

After the war her German boyfriend visited her at Grantown-on-Spey but was murdered shortly afterwards in Germany by a thief.

In about 1949 Mary received an invitation from Bob Fripp, a former army officer she had met in Kirkwall during the war, to visit him in Kenya. After that visit he proposed to her and in 1953 she married him in Nairobi and went to live on his farm nearby. Approximately 10 years later her husband died and because of the political unrest in Kenya she accepted a teaching post in New Zealand and remained there until her death in Levin at the age of 92 on the 8th of May 2001. She regularly corresponded with her sister in Grantown, who predeceased her, and other relatives in various places in the U.K. Unfortunately she was too ill to travel to Scotland for Isabel's funeral but is now, at last, back to the place that she always called home. Back to her family and the place of her birth after a journey both long in time and distance, "Full Circle".

Poems (enclosed with obituary)

Communion Reflection (an American Indian's Prayer to God)

O Great Spirit whose voice I hear in the wind,
And whose breath gives life to the world,
Hear me.

I come to you as one of your many children,
I am small and weak.

I need your strength and wisdom.

May I walk in beauty

Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset

Make my hands respect the things you have made

And my ears sharp to hear your voice

Make me wise so that I may know

The things you have taught your children;

The lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock

Make me strong that I may not be superior to

Other people, but able to fight my greatest enemy

Which is myself

Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes,

So that when life fades as the fading sunset;

My spirit may come to you without shame.

To Loo

I do not know why these should come to me

A thought of someone far away

With soft insistence on the memory

Except there be a need that I should pray

Perhaps just then you have a fiercer fight

A more despairing weakness, a decay

Of courage; darkness, some lost sense of sight

And so in case you need my prayer – I pray

Then do the same for me should I intrude

Unasked upon you on some busy day

Give me a moments prayer as interlude

Be very sure I need it – therefore pray