

FP Magazine 2005

Former Pupils and Old Club Reunion  
Ben Mhor Hotel  
April 2005  
(photograph courtesy of Sandy McCook)



## GRANTOWN GRAMMAR COMMUNITY SPORTS COMPLEX



Artist's impression of the new Community Sports Complex.

Work began in October 2005 on providing a £2.4 million Community Sports Complex at Grantown Grammar School.



Local Highland Councillor Basil Dunlop was joined by retired solicitor, Gordon McCulloch, former provost and town clerk of the town, to cut the first turfs of the project, which will feature a 4-badminton court sports hall, a new gym and field sports changing rooms, fitness suite and dance studio. In addition to this a reception area will link all facilities including access to the swimming pool.

Both Councillor Dunlop and Mr McCulloch are former Chairpersons of the original Steering Group which started the community project in 1988. This became the Strathspey Leisure and Recreational Trust which, led by Mr McCulloch, progressed the project and raised substantial local funding. In 2002 changes in national funding criteria required The Highland Council's Education, Culture and Sport Service to sponsor the project. Project Management will be undertaken by the 'in house' Property and Architectural Service (PAS).

The design by architect, Nick Taylor, PAS, includes a strong element of sustainable design, which has high insulation, natural ventilation, the use of technologies such as ground source heat pumps and timber cladding.

Funding for the project has been received from the Big Lottery Fund £931,122, sportscotland £300,000 and Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise £120,000 and the Strathspey Leisure and Recreation

Trust have contributed £100,000 which has been raised through many years hard work fund-raising in the local community. The Highland Council met the balance of £950,000.

There has also been consultation with Grantown Grammar School and the Grantown Golf Club and their input, along with that of the Strathspey Leisure Recreational Trust, has been a significant factor in attracting the external funding without which it would not have been possible to develop this project.

The facility will be operated by the Council's Education, Culture and Sport Service under a formal School/Community Management agreement.

The contract has been awarded to Les Taylor Contracts and the facility should be open by October, next year.

Councillor, Basil Dunlop said: "I am delighted that we have finally reached this important day - it has been a long haul. This will be a major asset to the area, a superb indoor sport and leisure centre which will be a much appreciated and well-used community facility. I would like to thank the funding bodies, Highland Council staff, my fellow Trustees and the Grantown community for all their support and hard work in achieving this."

Grantown Grammar School Rector Malcolm MacLennan said: "Schools and Community in the Grantown-on-Spey area have always been extremely sport-conscious. The Sports Hall will be a tremendous asset and it will enable people of all ages to access a much greater range of healthy activities – this will benefit us all."

David Campbell, Big Lottery Fund Scotland Board Member, said: "This new sports facility at Grantown Grammar School is fantastic news not only for young people in Grantown but also the wider community. The Big Lottery Fund wants to open new opportunities for people to take part in sport and outdoor activity in fun and innovative ways. That's why we need more facilities like this in Scotland where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, are encouraged to take part in healthy activities."

Julia Bracewell OBE, Chair of sportscotland, said: "sportscotland is delighted to be supporting the creation of the new sports complex at Grantown Grammar School, which will see both the school and local community benefit from a major new sports facility. This project is another example of sportscotland's commitment to providing communities across Scotland with quality, accessible facilities, to ensure that more people have the opportunity to be more active, more often."

Ian Findlay, Chairman of Strathspey Leisure Recreational Trust, said: "Members of the Trust are delighted that after many years the dream of a modern leisure complex has now come true. This is a much needed facility for the Strathspey area that we are sure will be well used. There have been many difficulties over the years but these have been overcome and we would like to pay particular thanks to the local community who had given unstinting support to the many fund-raising events that the Trust have organised."

Stuart Black, chief executive of Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise said: "We are very pleased to be able to assist with this ambitious and exciting project. The new sports complex will provide much needed indoor facilities for a wide range of activities that can be used all year round, which will be a great asset for Grantown Grammar and the wider community."

(Press release from [highland.gov.uk](http://highland.gov.uk))

## EDITORIAL & FOREWORD

It was very gratifying for the committee to see so many attending the 2004 Biennial Reunion. Hopefully we will see even more at the next one! We do appreciate all of you who return your slips with news of families, holidays etc. without which there would be no F.P. Magazine – please keep them coming.

Margaret Masson

## COMMITTEE

President – Malcolm MacLennan

Honorary President – Miss Jean Paterson

Mr A Grant, Mrs Chrissie Grant, Mrs Betty Grant

Mr Bill Templeton, Mrs Seonaid Vickerman, Mrs Shirley Findlay,

Mr Angus Mackintosh, Mr Stewart Grant, Mr Sandy McCook,

Mrs Daphne Ritchie, Mrs Margaret Masson

GRANTOWN GRAMMAR SCHOOL FORMER PUPILS' AND OLD GUARD CLUBS					
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT 2004-2005					
2004	RECEIPTS	2005	2004	PAYMENTS	2005
£ 1,303.80	Balance - Deposit Account*	£ 1,090.32	£ 700.00	School Donation - Library/Prizes	£ 750.00
£ 2,340.89	Balance - Flexible Savings Account	£ 2,344.90	£ 150.26	Postages (magazines and info slip mailing )	£ 154.94
£ 0.87	Interest- Deposit Account*	£ 0.70	£ 153.62	Photocopying	£ 129.00
£ 4.01	Interest - Flexible Savings Account	£ 16.83	£ 14.08	Envelopes and Labels	£ 10.56
£ 174.00	Magazine Orders	£ 184.00	£ 49.30	Paper/Plastic combs*	£ 59.50
£ 220.00	Lomac Magazine Sales	£ 214.00	£ 0.00	Dinner (including gratuity)	£ 1,088.00
£ 420.91	Donations	£ 442.00	£ 0.00	Advert for Dinner	£ 25.30
£ 38.00	New Recruits	£ 22.00	£ 0.00	Purchase of Old Guard Ties	£ 161.57
£ 0.00	Tie Sales	£ 85.00	£ 1,090.32	Balance - Deposit Account	£ 747.15
£ 0.00	Dinner Tickets	£ 1,088.00	£ 2,344.90	Balance - Flexible Savings Account	£ 2,361.73
£ 4,502.48		£ 5,487.75	£ 4,502.48		£ 5,487.75
* Difference of 8p (estimation in last year's accounts)			* Slide binders more expensive than comb binders! Binding machine was broken at the time of magazine production.		

Message from the School Librarian, Mrs Cath Buxton. One hundred pounds of last year's contribution to the library went towards a new set of Encyclopaedia Britannica and a new set of World Book Encyclopaedia. The last set was 15 years old and in desperate need of updating! The rest of the money went towards updating the bookstock, some fiction, some non-fiction. The non-fiction is more in need of a boost to accommodate pupil research for projects and discursive essays.

## **THE 2005 BIENNIAL REUNION**

Like in 2003 the response by members to the invitation to attend the 2005 Reunion was marvellous! Shortly after 7.30 pm on Saturday 9 April 2005 some 68 Former Pupils, wives, partners and friends were safely seated in The Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown – ready for the Biennial General Meeting.

Mr Malcolm MacLennan, President and Rector of the School warmly welcomed the company then immediately called upon Bill Templeton to conduct the business meeting – having first made sure that all orders for the meal had been safely recorded!

Bill got straight down to the business in hand and after reminding members that the Minutes of the first Biennial Meeting had been advised within the reports in the 2003 Magazine found that the Company unanimously agreed that these minutes be accepted as correct. Similarly reference was made to the fact that the 2004 Magazine had included a copy of the Accounts for the two-year period to October 2004 and there was unanimous acceptance that the Statements referred to were wholly acceptable to all. This led to agreement that the Club's donation to the School for library books and prizes for the year ended June 2005 be £750 – an increase of £50 over the 2004 figure.

The next item on the Agenda was adoption of the revised Constitution as suggested by the Club's Committee at their previous meeting. Again the proposed Constitution and Rules had been printed in full in the 2004 Magazine and the various items were briefly discussed. Thereafter it was readily agreed to adopt the revised Constitution.

Item 8 on the Agenda dealt with the appointment of a new Committee. It was unanimously agreed that Mr Malcolm MacLennan be re-appointed President with Miss Jean Paterson continuing as The Honorary President. The meeting readily agreed to the re-appointment of Margaret Masson, as Honorary Secretary and Daphne Ritchie as Honorary Treasurer. The meeting also readily agreed to accept a Committee made up of Mr Martin Grant, Mrs Chrissie Grant, Mrs Betty Grant, Mrs Seonaid Vickerman, Mrs Shirley Findlay and Bill Templeton. Added to the Committee for the first time were Angus Mackintosh, Sandy McCook and Stewart Grant and the members warmly welcomed their introduction.

Members were informed that a supply of Old Guard Ties – in scarlet and silver, of course, had been obtained and that some 12 of these were on view! Bill Templeton would hold the remaining stock and would welcome further purchases! At £5 each the ties were regarded as a real bargain. Reference was made to the enjoyable and informative tour of the Grammar School by some 14 members earlier in the day. Members were also reminded about the informal golf outing on the Grantown course on the Sunday morning at 10 am and the meeting was informed that a further arrangement had been made for a visit to the Old School – now the Grantown on Spey Primary School - at 3 pm on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>.

There was no further business and the meeting was brought to a close at 7.55 pm.

Mr MacLennan called on Gordon MacGregor to say grace and the Company then proceeded to enjoy the Reunion Meal. After the meal the President was delighted to introduce two speakers. The first speaker was Mrs Nancy Forsyth from Avoch who in her early days lived in Cromdale. She recounted a number of stories about her school days in Grantown, life on The Black Isle and other interests, sprinkling her address with many humorous tales. She was followed by Mr Michael H McTaggart, formerly of Easter Gallovie, Dulnain Bridge. He was Dux Medalist in 1947 then went on to gain a BSc with Honours at Edinburgh University. He became a physicist with the Atomic Energy Authority then later with the Ministry of Defence. He also spoke of his early years in the School, touched briefly on his working life and then went on to speak of his extensive travels



especially in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions since his retirement some 12 years ago. Mr MacLennan warmly thanked both speakers and thereafter the Company enjoyed a spell of 'blether' and the sharing of memories with so many old and new friends.

**GREGOR D ALLAN**

Still at Schroders as a non-executive director and a director of Rathbones. Enjoying life. Still piping and will be at the Liberation Service in Jersey which will be celebrated in the company of H.M. the Queen as it is 60 years since the island was liberated from German occupation.

**JEAN BIRRELL (DONALD) (1943 – 1949)**

Enjoying retirement - playing bridge and bowling.

**MRS PAMELA BRAID (GIBSON) (1939 – 1946)**

Having a new house built in my garden has meant a very busy year and moving, after 45 years, has been a huge task. However, I am delighted with my new house and I'm enjoying the advantages of modern heating and a smaller house. With all that behind me, I now hope to get back onto the golf course again!

**MRS R J CHAPMAN (ELIZABETH McDONALD)**

I will be visiting our son and daughter-in-law in London in October/November '05, with a flying visit to Grantown – looking forward to it all.

**ROSEMARY CHARLISH (MASSON)**

Had a wonderful trip to Perth in Australia to visit my son Kyle who celebrated his 21<sup>st</sup>. It was a great experience but not nearly long enough and very sad to leave. Kayleigh had her 18<sup>th</sup> this October. Ellen (6) continues to enjoy school. I am also back flying with City Star between Aberdeen, Oslo and Birmingham, which I am enjoying apart from early morning shifts!

**ALISON CLARK (RONALDSON) (1933-1944)**

With the passage of time and my advancing years I had to make the decision in 2004 to give up the family home and find an alternative with a smaller garden. I eventually found this "house for one" in a pleasant residential area of Inverness. Settling in has been made easier by the fact I have as a near neighbour Anne Knight (Grant) who is a life long friend and former work colleague in Grantown. My son Graeme still enjoys the varied life at Heathrow and his home in Bracknell. I correspond with Mairi Erskine, Lockerbie, who is the daughter of John and Isabel McCallum (McBeath, Station Cottages). She keeps me up to date with news of her parents, now happily resident in North Argyll Eventide Home, Oban. Recently I was able to pass a lovely handwritten letter from Mairi with family photos to other F.P's who knew Isabel. I also try to keep in touch with Myles and Mina Ritson (Keith) in Canada. Thanks to all concerned in the production of the Magazine.

**WILMA COWAN (IRVING) (1942-1954)**

Enjoyed last year's trip to Germany so we are off back there again this year. We were very impressed. Everywhere was so clean and everyone so friendly. Oldest son Alasdair, will be in Iraq for one month then off to Bosnia in May for five months. Middle son Adrian goes to the Falklands in June for four months (his third visit there). It will be their winter so should be pretty cold while he's there.

**WALTER DEMPSTER (1949-1955)**

A 'gey' lot of water has flowed under the Spey Bridge since I last wrote to the Magazine. In fact it is so long ago that I have forgotten what I have written in the past, but here goes. I can hardly

believe that it will be exactly fifty years this summer since I left the Grammar School to go to Aberdeen University. I'm ashamed to admit that I have not attended any of the dinners held since that and I can honestly say I thoroughly enjoyed this year's reunion last month, although I was a little disappointed at the small number of our era there. We come down to Grantown quite often but I see no-one I know in the street. Since 1969 we have been living at Arnage, 6 miles north of Ellon, where I was head teacher of the small primary school. In 1995 I took early retirement, having become somewhat disillusioned with the education system – more and more paperwork and less and less job-satisfaction. From conversations with former colleagues I gather the situation has become even worse. Early in 2003 my wife suggested modernising the house in Rothiemurchus and moving there permanently. We were put in touch with Ron Laing of A W Laing, in Grantown, who suggested a better course of action might be to demolish the old home and rebuild on the same site. This we did and finally moved just before the New Year. We are both enjoying life in the area and it's good to be back in the old haunts. As we're both retired now we can take each day as it comes. I should add that we have the highest regard for A W Laing. Everybody within the organisation has been very helpful. Our two sons are now middle-aged. The younger, Gary, is with the Fingerprint Department in Grampian Police in Aberdeen. He is still single, and two years ago he bought a flat in Stonehaven. He had a tremendous collection of Malt Whisky miniatures – more than 2500 – but he has moved on to golfing memorabilia, and the miniatures are a thing of the past but not consumed I should add. The older, Walter, moved up to Larbert some four or five years ago and is with BAE Systems outside Glasgow. He and his wife Sharon have two children. Siobhan is just finishing first year in the secondary and Stuart is eight. Siobhan came down with me to see round the old school the day after the reunion. That was an experience I thoroughly enjoyed as I had not been back there since 1955. I was surprised to see how little was changed over the years, although the trapdoor in the boys' cloakroom was no longer visible. The names mentioned that day brought back memories: Mr Donaldson, Mr McKenzie, Mr Thornton, Miss Pyper and Miss Grant – all of whom left a lasting impression on me. It was very easy to visualise them still there with Mr Hunter and Dr Bain keeping all in order. Miss Grant took the whole of our first year, numbering some 72, for arithmetic and art. Over the years I have kept up with Robin Fraser who is still resident in Aberdeen and he and his wife have come up to the house in Rothiemurchus most summers for a holiday. I keep looking for familiar faces whenever we are down in Grantown. I was pleasantly surprised to meet Angus Mackintosh out walking in Rothiemurchus last year, and to find he is now resident in Aviemore. He has looked in on several occasions since then and I look forward to visits from any others from our period. Three years or so ago I met Margaret Smith up in Kirkwall of all places. This was a result of having a conversation with a passenger on the crossing to Orkney – who turned out to be her son-in-law. Sadly, there are a few who are no longer with us, but they live on in our memories.

#### **KEITH DONALDSON (1944-1954)**

It's a small world. I recently moved to a new residential area on a golf course in Kamloops. One of my neighbours is Garth Carr who was in the same class in secondary school at Grantown. He commuted by bus from Nethybridge and is now a successful builder here. I am semi-retired but am about to do a locum in Bermuda for two months, tough work but someone has to do it!

#### **DOUGIE EDWARDS (1996-2002)**

Going in to my fourth year at Napier (really enjoying the course). My 21<sup>st</sup> in June so big celebrations planned by my Mum and Dad. Playing in four bands, so kept very busy with my music.

#### **SHIRLEY A FINDLAY**

Most impressed with Portugal when we were there in July and weather was great. Still managing to keep the Primary School children well fed at the canteen – almost Jamie Oliver standard!!!

**NANCY FORSYTH (GRAY) (see further inset)**

Had a wonderful time meeting fellow pupils at the Biennial Reunion. On arrival carrying three of my GGS exercise books of sixty years ago, you're straight to the point, office bearer Billy Templeton, after the obligatory kiss said, "you're not going to say all that are you?" I wish now I had brought along a photo of Billy taken in 1953. He looks just the same, but minus the hair – ouch! Usually my long-suffering husband is so quiet, but Daphne Ritchie was able to get him to talk. Thanks Daphne. In April Willie received a long service certificate from Church of Scotland, Edinburgh for fifty years service as an office bearer and elder. As far as I'm concerned he is a saint – you have to be, married to me for over fifty years. I enclose a poem for all 80 year olds, sent to us a few years ago.

I Love to Live

Today, dear Lord, I'm 80 and there's much I haven't done  
I hope, dear Lord, you'll let me live until I'm 81  
But then, if I haven't finished all I want to do  
Would you let me stay awhile until I'm 82  
So many places I want to go, so much I want to see  
Do you think you could manage to make it 83?  
The world is changing very fast, there's so much in store  
I'd very much like to live until I'm 84  
And if by then I'm still alive, I'd like to stay to 85!  
More planes will be up in the air, so I'd like to stick around and mix  
And see what happens to the world when I'm 86  
I know dear Lord, its much to ask  
(and it must be nice in Heaven)  
But I'd really like to stay around until I'm 87  
I know by then I won't be fast and sometimes will be late  
But it would be so pleasant to be here at 88  
I would have seen so many things and had a wonderful time  
So, I'm sure that I'll be well to leave at 89.....maybe!  
Just one more thing I'd like to say, dear Lord, I thank you kindly  
But if it's OK with you, I'd love to live past 90!

**MAUREEN FEARNLEY (MacAULAY) (1960-1963)**

Off on a family cruise in June to celebrate my 60<sup>th</sup> and younger daughter's 30<sup>th</sup>. Wish it were to celebrate a family wedding or a grandchild!! All those who know me will know what I mean!!!

**ELSPETH FRASER (MITCHELL) (1935-1947)**

Two of our sons have built houses beside us here in Kilmorack and our daughter is in vicinity also. This means we have seven of our nine grandchildren nearby. Eldest granddaughter is now at Aberdeen University. When we grow old we trust somebody will look after us!! Still manage two mornings at badminton and am secretary of Beaully Senior Citizens' Association.

**MARLENE A FRASER (McWILLIAM) (1940?-1951)**

Thank you for excellent magazine (2004). Allan and I are enjoying our retirement nine years on. We visit Grantown-on-Spey between March and November very frequently. Quite a bit of painting needs to be done at Burnroad Cottage this year. Looking forward to the 2005 Reunion at the Ben Mhor Hotel and meeting friends. Thanks to all who work so hard to keep us in touch.

**ROBIN U FRASER (1951-1958)**

Must say that I enjoyed, I'm ashamed to say, my first Biennial Dinner in the Ben Mhor. My only disappointment was that more people who were in the school in the 1950's were not there. However maybe in 2007!! Retired life is still good, revolving around walking and bowling. Due to eye



problems gardening and golf have had to be cut back. Grandchildren, three girls, are growing fast. Highers, Standard Grades and first year at Stirling. Doesn't seem so long ago I was pushing them around Morlich. Hope to be in Grantown in 2005, so maybe see some more "kent faces".

#### **GRAHAM GRANT (1975-1979)**

I've been a bit neglectful as far as returning these slips are concerned. Dad's sad passing on 20<sup>th</sup> March and the huge sea of familiar faces at his funeral prompted me to make more of an effort to keep up with my past!! Although we are regular visitors to Grantown, I hardly see any of my old classmates. The few I do see remind me of my own approaching middle age, although it's true that even if life doesn't begin at 40, it gets a good kick start! Life in Invergordon has been pretty good. Chris is in First year at the Academy and Margaret is in P5 at one of our two primaries. I'm now the Marine Supervisor responsible for our two pilot cutters and crews. We've a busy year coming up with a total of 46 liner visits including Queen Mary II and QE2 – very busy days for the town. The oil industry still accounts for about 75% of our trade, even though it's supposed to be in its middle age also! I'm back into the Pipe Band world and am now teaching snare drum in our recently formed Easter Ross Pipes and Drums School – first public performance for the kids (because band consists entirely of P6-S4 children) – the Queen Mary II on 19<sup>th</sup> June – great start for the summer.

#### **MRS M E GRANT (BETTY) (TEMPLETON)**

Still enjoy frequent visits to see all the family. This year we had an added request from the grandchildren. "Please look after our dog whilst we are on holiday". A rather pleasant task as we both walk daily – and the dog thoroughly enjoyed his romps through the woods around here. Had a lovely break in North Majorca – always nice to visit the island. Meanwhile Fiona and Shelagh are in New York. Thanks to Margaret (our secretary) for reminding me to send in the return. What would we do without her?

#### **GILLIAN HENDERSON (1956-1962)**

Wonderful Christmas (04) holidays spent in Nethy. Katie (16) and Hamish (12) enjoyed ski-ing and sledging instead of hot summer in Oz.

#### **MRS P A M HIGGINS (PAM MACPHERSON) (1949-1956)**

Much occupied with difficult birthings in recent months; arrival of first grandchild (Gabriel) just before Christmas, was followed three weeks later by a litter of five border terrier puppies. Despite problematic beginnings, all new parents coped magnificently, and the newborns thrived. The puppies have now gone out into the world; the grandson plans to stick around a bit longer!

#### **MRS JEAN HOGG (CRUICKSHANK)**

Enjoy regular visits from family. Had a good day out in June with Arthritis Care sailing down Loch Katrine – even the weather stayed nice for us.

#### **G G ILLINGWORTH**

Elaine and I still living in the same house in Cupar, Fife, after nearly 48 years. Our three children live in Norway, Edinburgh and Glasgow and we have ten grandchildren. Looking forward to the summer when we enjoy visits to Grantown-on-Spey and meeting school friends.

#### **SARAH JACK (1994-2000)**

After graduating last summer I am now working for an oil and gas company, Gyrodata Ltd., in Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. I am thoroughly enjoying the world of work and the opportunities it provides. I am looking forward to a holiday in Rhodes this summer.

**ARCHIE LIGGAT (1963-1976)**

Continue to fly the globe as a 747 pilot with British Airways and around Fife as a part-owner of my own 1946 vintage aeroplane. Girls now 15 and 11 and both deeply involved in clubs and activities in St Andrews. Liz often busy teaching at Madras College.

**MRS JANE LILLEY (MACAULAY) (1965-1971)**

Still teaching communication core skills at Aberdeen College, plus training to be an adult literacy tutor. Husband John still working with oil tools and has been working abroad, in Siberia. Son Andrew (21) currently working with an architectural firm in Inverness, as his practical year from R.G.U. Daughter Alison (19) in second year of studying zoology at Glasgow University. We visit Nethy Bridge with increasing regularity, hoping to move back there in a few years.

**GILLIAN McCARTHY (BEVERIDGE) (1988-1994)**

Well, what a year I've had. Gareth and I got married last April 2004 in a wonderful humanist ceremony at one of the best hotels in South Wales. We had the most fabulous day and enjoyed every single part of it. The following weekend Mum and Dad threw a party in the Coppice Hotel, which was again fantastic and it was great to see some old school friends. I have moved jobs to work at the sharp end. Instead of complaining about children's social services, I joined them. I work in the Referral and Assessment Team, which is basically the Child Protection team. It is the sharpest of sharp ends and is very emotionally draining but the thought of protecting children helps me through the day. I am almost at the end of my Distance Learning course, which will be very rewarding when I have completed it. Still no further to learning the bagpipes although know where to get my hands on some and who can teach me. Still loving living in Welsh Wales and getting round to seeing most of it. We have had a rough few months recently. Gareth's dad passed away after 14 months of hospitalisation and illness. The following week I had my tonsils out and was like a child for a few weeks wanting jelly and ice-cream but getting toast. As for the rest of the family, they are all fine. Craig is still very happily married to Manda and living in Poole. Mum and Dad are socially active. They are never in when I phone and are always going visiting places at weekends, I think my inheritance is well and truly spent!

**WILMA McDONALD (WATT)**

We are a bit isolated down here in South Africa but it is an internationally recognised tourist destination able to cater to a wide variety of interests. Temperatures can drop to the minuses overnight in the winter but daytime temperatures are generally between 16 – 18 degrees. Average in the summer is about 22 to 28 degrees. We do get lashing rain but we need it because in this area at 6000 above sea level, we have bone dry winters. Scotland will always be my country but I don't think I could face Scotland's weather, having got used to sunshine 80% of the year. I am planning coming over again next year because my grandson plays the pipes with Benoni High School Pipe Band and they are currently top of the heap. In 2006 they hope to benefit from and improve their 2004 experiences at "Worlds" at Glasgow Green. In the meantime they are applying to Guinness World Records to attempt a world record in piping, drumming and dancing in October. If Guinness is not successful they will go for a record anyway then put it on the World Wide Web as a challenge. Nothing, if not enterprising – but also it's a fund raising campaign for Scotland '06. My granddaughter has progressed rapidly through Highland Dancing levels but is now finding it tougher at Championship level. However she has two more years in her age group at that level – but you try telling a ten year old she has time on her side – not like her Nana! This business of getting old is not for cissies! I'm on treatment for back problems and am having minor surgery at the weekend and I doubt the days of climbing trees and jumping the burn, are well and truly over. By the way at R11 = £1, a holiday out here is not only a pleasurable but an inexpensive experience.

**IAN MacGILLIVRAY (1938-1943)**

Very fit for a Very Old Guard! Sorry unable to attend the Dinner.

**MRS IRIS McINTOSH (FORBES) (1948-1961)**

Having put a red pen through 2004 (Mum spent six months in Ian Charles Hospital. We wrote off our 4x4, I broke my ankle, Mum moved in to Grant House and we parted company with 31 Kylantra Crescent). We were looking forward to a new year with the arrival of our little granddaughter, Abigail, on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2004, when Mum died very suddenly on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and my father-in-law had a stroke the following day. Fortunately (if that is the right word!) we have escaped the “bad fairy” since then and now we are looking forward to holidaying in U.S.A. for three weeks in June. Our youngsters have both moved house – Fiona and her husband bought their local village pub and are so far enjoying their adventure and Stuart and Nicola are now five minutes away instead of the two they were before!

**FAYE McLEOD (1998-2004)**

Presently studying sports medicine at Glasgow University

**BEN McLEOD**

Completed HND in Sports Science in the Glasgow College of Nautical Science, worked part-time in the bar trade in Glasgow as a student and now live in Glasgow and continued with the hospitality industry and currently working for the Frankenstein pubs and clubs as a manager.

**GEMMA McLEOD**

Attained a degree in Nursing at Queen Margaret’s University College in Edinburgh. Working in Accident & Emergency Department in the Manchester Royal, travelled and worked for a year in Australia plus a further three months travelling in South America. Back at Manchester Royal again, but will commence studying again in September 2005 to do a further degree this time in Medicine.

**SAM McLEOD**

Have one more year to go at Napier University in Edinburgh studying Popular Music. Currently play in three bands in my spare time. Locally, the Anne Dickson Band and The Approvals along with Mike MacLennan, Dougie Edwards and Andrew MacLennan and his Edinburgh band Sleepsilver. Hope to make it big in the music business.

**ELIZABETH McIVER (McBEATH) 1934-1951)**

Delighted to get an information slip after a lapse of many years. Very little interesting news I’m afraid. Change of address – I sold my bigger house and moved into a convenient flat in town and I am fortunate to have my son and my daughter living quite near. Both my sister and brother – Margaret and Donnie have died. Isobel – the eldest of the family – is now in a local care home – with her husband who has had a stroke – which leaves me – the youngest – getting frail – too old! Miss my long holidays abroad in winter but hope to be fit enough next year. With regards to Alick Dick (who taught me to knit) and Duncan.

**SIMON MacAULAY (1963-1969)**

EIS Assistant General Secretary responsible for Education, Equalities and Communications.

**JAMES MACDONALD (1943-1945)**

We had intended cruising round South America, the Pacific to New Zealand, Australia and the Far East, then back to America, the Panama, the Caribbean and home. Instead once round the Isle of Wight and a trip to Portland and back to Southampton. Aurora was never going to make it. However ten days of luxury in the Mayflower Terminal with FREE hospitality was very enjoyable even if the view across a chemical works could have been better. Will try again in 2007. We did make the Nethy Games in August, with beautiful weather and for the second year running, which must be a record.

**GORDON MacGREGOR (1938-1950)**

Rector of Alyth High School. Now in my tenth year of retirement. Founder member of Scottish Fiddle Orchestra which celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. My grandson Gordon and my granddaughter Lynsey (his cousin) won the title in successive years of Master Chef Junior. They have given cooking demonstrations around the area, one of the big ones was Scone Palace Game Fair. They are in great demand for charities. Gordon has been invited to Gleneagles Hotel and has been invited by Gary Rhodes to compete in London on TV. My oldest granddaughter (19) Kirsty – Gordon's sister is in her second year of Media Studies at Edinburgh University. Nicola (sister of Lynsey) is 17 and leaves school this summer to start in the Faculty of Mathematics in St Andrews University. The Dinner this year made me feel proud to have the Cairngorm Badge Award. This dates back to 1950.

**RACHEL MACKAY (MacROBERT) (1964-1969)**

Still enjoying travelling abroad during school holidays. Other than that enjoying a quiet life in the north with my husband.

**KEITH McKERRON (1937-1940)**

Made a third visit to Australia in round the world trip. Sailed from Capetown to Perth – to be recommended for the older traveller! Stayed in Melbourne with daughter Isobel and family. Visitors the previous week were Jim Hair and wife Lilian (Stuart) – a cousin, both F.P.'s – a small world. On way home called on sister Connie in Florida who was unable to offer her usual hospitality as her roof had gone in Hurricane Frances. With her usual sang-froid (sports champion in 38/39) she was waiting repairs.

**ALAN McTAGGART (1954-1958?)**

Tripped through Scotland in June 2005. Had a great time – but where was the sun?

**IAN D MASSON**

Had a wonderful holiday in Florida with Sam and Elise – managed to avoid all the hurricanes. Life at the garage as busy as ever but much easier now that Ian Findlay has joined me. Can even have days off – if he lets me!!

**MARGARET MASSON (STUART)**

Had a flying visit from brother Ian and Nancy in September before they went back to Sierra Leone. He was just back from a stint in Rwanda. Continue to help out in the garage and trying to keep the mechanics in order! Enjoy having most of the grandchildren quite near – certainly keeps me busy. So nice to hear from Margaret Shiach (Smith) who I don't think I have spoken to since our schooldays.

**MICHAEL A MUNRO (1957-1970)**

Back in Grantown after 33 years and absolutely loving it. Two children at Primary school, (Sam 10 and Kristin 6). My older sons Andrew (24), now a qualified surveyor, and Nicholas (21) architecture student in Glasgow. They love their visits here, especially the golf course. Wife Roslin runs the Brownies and I am on Primary School Board, involved with boys football tournament, work hard from office in the house (quantity surveyor) and play golf.

**MRS ANN MURRAY (STEWART) (1957-1965)**

Still teaching in Inverkeithing Nursery – find life with 3 and 4 year olds can be exhausting and look forward to retiring in two years! Had a good weekend at beginning of May with Kate Brown (nee Millar) and Carol Becket (nee Stuart) in Edinburgh. Visit sister Jane Grant at Tomdhu, Boat of Garten as often as possible and see quite a lot of brother James and family in Dalkeith.

### **ELIZABETH D MUTCH**

Having outlived most of my school friends apart from the Paterson sisters and Dr Jimmy Allan, it is time for me to say farewell to the school. I remember my schooldays and my old school friends and those who taught us with great affection. I left Grantown Grammar in 1928 with my head held high (pride - one of the seven deadly sins!). I had just won the Harvey Dux Medal, the A D Campbell Mathematics Medal and the Dr Fawcett Science Medal together with a useful clutch of Highers - English, including History and Geography, French, Latin, Mathematics and Science. I remember the splendid education I got in Grantown Grammar with gratitude for I applied for only one job in my working life, that of Matron of Roodlands Hospital, Haddington. The other jobs all applied for me. Now the time has come for me to say farewell. Farewell to my fondly remembered Alma Mater and to the Grantown I knew and loved so well. Vivat Academia.

### **AMELIA OAKES (EDWARDS) (1952-1958)**

We started 2005 by spending nine weeks in New Zealand at our daughter's. Enjoyed playing golf without waterproof suits! Arrived back late March in time to be reminded by Bill Templeton about the F P's Reunion. It was good to catch up with other F P's but sorry there weren't more from the 50's. Met up with Robin Fraser whom I haven't seen since 1957. Thanks again to the committee for all their hard work.

### **MARGARET OLLASON (GRANT) (1932-1938)**

There has been great sadness this year for me and my family – my beloved son, Peter lost his hard fought battle against cancer and I also lost two of my best friends. On a lighter and happier note my fourth beautiful great-granddaughter, Charlotte was born. Isabel Squires autobiography brings back many memories. I am looking forward to part 2.

### **ISOBEL ORFORD (CALDER) (1937-1948)**

Greetings from Fergus where this year we are celebrating sixty years of Highland Games, though it's not until August it's something to look forward to and hopefully meet up with folks from the old country, like the Strathspey and Reel Orchestra who visited two or maybe even three years ago. They got your feet tapping and the pipe bands that stir all the old feelings of home. We had a family reunion last year when our youngest son and family visited. Apart from that it was a fairly quiet year. Hopefully more news next year.

### **MARGERY PATERSON (MACAULAY) (1969-1974)**

Still being kept busy in Cumnock – supply teaching, learning Gaelic, handbell ringing and involving myself in various Church activities.

### **RON PHILIP**

Looking forward to the Nethy Games 2005 and a week in Grantown for the Clan Grant Reunion (5 years) – 13<sup>th</sup> August – 20<sup>th</sup> August. We spent two weeks in Nova Scotia on holiday – ceilidhs every night – had a great time. Also survived two hurricanes while in Freeport.

### **MRS MONA RAE (GRANT) (1951-1965)**

Life plods on through the ups and downs of Inverness College. I get slower with the onset of arthritis. I thought it only happened to old people till I realised I am getting quite old! No huge changes or events.

### **SUSAN RILEY (GRANT) (1962-1974)**

Mathew is now 19, Daniel 17 – both just about ready to fly the nest – don't know how we'll manage without them!!

**DAPHNE RITCHIE (DUNCAN) (1971-1977)**

Another year spent teaching, golfing, gardening, playing with the digital camera and the computer, and a qualified NPLQ (pool lifeguard) again. Oh, and the housework gets done now and again!

**WILLIAMINA RITSON (KEITH) (1924-1937)**

Both Myles and I still agile although we don't venture far afield. With a view of the inlet and the mountains beyond, what more could one ask for at our age. Our family live close by. Our great grandson Braeden who is 5 and now his sister Brianna who is 18 months often come to visit. Then we had a new addition to the family – a lively and loveable great grandson Logan Myles. He and his Mum and Dad live in Edmonton. I still enjoy hearing from Bill Ledingham, Margaret Ollason and Alice McCurdy (King). Best wishes to all FP's.

**DAVIS ROBERTSON (THOMSON) (1958-1964)**

Very busy summer '04 with visit of aunt, Wilma McDonald (Watt) over from Johannesburg with daughter, grandson (who competed with his school band Benoni High) in the World Pipe Band Championships at Glasgow Green. Her granddaughter also competed in various highland dancing competitions. Jimmy and I were the support party! They all helped me to move house to my new flat – preparing for retirement – hopefully next year!! I'm still kept busy supporting bilingual pupils and looking after my toddler granddaughter. I'm not sure which job is harder.

**ALEX ROSS (1957-1960)**

Sister Margaret died in June 2004 after a long illness. Had several trips to Grantown last year due to Mum's failing health, which resulted in her death in January 2005. It was lovely to see so many "Grantown faces" at the funeral.

**PATRICIA ROSS (MACDONALD)**

We hope to be in Grantown in July. My husband goes to have treatment for macular degeneration in a hospital in London, Ontario.

**WALTER ROSS OBE (1946-1958)**

Completely retired from policing. Travelling extensively. Sadly my mother died this year, so don't expect to be visiting Grantown so often as in the past.

**MRS CONSTANCE SHAW (GORDON) (1928-1936)**

Bank Officer (Retired). I was very interested in reading the first chapter of "Isabella Squires Autobiography". It was so interesting as I kept up with Isa until she died – the photo of her on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday was lovely and she still looked so young. She used to take Alistair my brother and I out in our pram. Sorry I missed the Biennial Dinner again. My ulcer is still being dressed. Best wishes to all my classmates.

**MARGARET SHIACH (SMITH)**

My sister Dorothy (Mrs Balfour) died in Harare, Zimbabwe on 5<sup>th</sup> July. Sadly, she was predeceased by her husband, Bob many years ago, and also her son Colin, about 13 years ago. We bring our family and grandchildren up to Strathspey regularly and they love it there.

**JOAN SMITH (FRASER) (1945-1953)**

It is with much sadness that I record the death of my dear husband Iain. He had a major operation in 2003 and seemed to be making a good recovery. However it was not to be. He faced it all with his usual courage and dignity but passed away on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2005. I am very grateful and appreciative for the support of my friends and family.



### **MRS ISOBEL M SPALDING (GUNN) (1926-1937)**

With my osteoporosis over the years and a bad fall at home in October '03, ending with broken bones and surgery, I did have to move into a Residential Home in June '04, here in Aberdeen. It is very nice and I manage to attend to my own personal care so far. I still suffer very bad pain in my broken left hip and back and my legs are very painful and I can only walk about with my zimmer now. Just have to put up with it and carry on. I do miss getting out and about. I look forward to the magazine and all the news. Many thanks to Margaret and the committee who work hard producing it. I do miss my visits to Grantown and nice chats to Betty Grant (Templeton) and others I was lucky enough to meet. So sorry I cannot attend the Biennial Dinner now, have missed the last three now. Sincerely hope they continue and carry on the good name of Grantown Grammar School Former Pupils' and Old Guard Clubs. I was proud of our school and started at 4 years old with Don my brother, who was one year older than me. I remained with the class, doing well and even now remembering the names of our teachers at that time from Miss Gray up to Miss Lawson. Then on to High Grade classes. I did very well in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year exams and passed very well in many subjects. However I always wanted to be a hairdresser. I stayed on to 4<sup>th</sup> year and when I was 15 years old I started as an apprentice hairdresser in a local shop in the High Street, Mackintosh & Cummings. Was trained there for two years under a Miss MacPherson and went on to Glasgow Hairdressing College to finish my training and get some practice before returning to run the salon in Grantown for the next 18 years, minus my three and a half years serving in the ATS on Radar attached to a heavy mixed Ack Ack battery. First two years we moved about every month or so all around the coastal batteries of England and Wales January '43 – December '44. Volunteered for overseas service and after leave over to Ostend, Belgium and spent six months in Antwerp and home on leave and flew straight up to Germany and spent my last service year moving around Hamburg and to Hanover. Outings to many other parts further south including the Hertz Mountains and Mona Sea Dam with my ATS pals. We enjoyed leave in Paris and in June '46 left Germany and demobbed in York and home safely. I did do hairdressing for the company the last few months in Germany. Returned to Mackintosh & Cummings and enjoyed the next ten years attending to my dear customers.

### **NEIL STUART (1951-1963)**

Having retired from SQA at the end of 1998, I eventually went back to full time employment as a school manager in 2002. Still enjoying the school environment – my 5<sup>th</sup> head teacher is due to start soon! Two granddaughters are the highlight of weekend life.

### **THOMAS B STUART (1937-1950)**

Nothing of note to report – just got a year older (thankfully!)

### **ELSPIT SUTHERLAND (McINTOSH)**

My apologies! Did not realise a year has passed so soon. Definitely a sign of old age! We are well and kept busy with various activities – and grand children. Twice to Aberdeen, the Rotary Conference in October and Old Students' reunion in the last week. Enjoyed the Norwegian holiday and attended a wedding in the glacier mountains, most guests wearing National dress – lovely. I am looking forward(?) to another busy year as I am again president of the Innerwheel. We will be in Nethy Bridge in July and hope to meet up with old friends.

### **BILL AND RITA TEMPLETON (MARSHALL)**

Here we are at the beginning of September again and my thoughts have turned to preparing an entry for the Magazine – at least this year I am getting down to it before secretary Margaret starts shouting at me! It has been a strangely quick year – at least it has seemed so – maybe the weather has had something to do with it. Winter came and went with little or no snow but it was generally dull and wet. The same applies to Spring but at least we had the enjoyment of preparing for the 2005 Biennial Reunion. I felt that it went off well and as usual it was great to see so many old

friends and to renew old acquaintances – for me the highlight was meeting again with Michael McTaggart who I had not seen or spoken to since early 1948 when I was called up to do my National Service. Summer has come and gone with indifferent weather although we did have a marvellous spell in July. The one feature of the past few weeks, however, has been the return of the midges. The little blighters are everywhere and that has been unusual. I wonder if the lack of hard frost last winter has been the cause? Normally we hardly see – or feel them – in these parts but these last few weeks they have been real pests – quite reminded me of my days on the Isle of Skye! There the midges wear tackety boots! I feel sure that some of them came over to Speyside this year. Rita and I have had our usual quota of “breaks” again this year – Skye, Oban, Jedburgh, Northumberland and Strathpeffer so far. We plan a visit to Inverary at the end of the month and then who knows? After all though, is that not the reason we retire, just to trot off on holiday whenever the spirit moves.

#### **MRS T S B THOMSON (MORTIMER) (1926-1939)**

Life goes on as usual, even though the ageing process takes its toll. When visiting my brother-in-law in July/August '04 I had a surprise visit from Bill Ledingham. Can't remember when I last saw him. He had been trying to contact any remaining classmates and needed a photograph for his “Rogues Gallery”. Always enjoy the Magazine – very grateful for all the work that goes into keeping us in touch.

#### **JAY WARD (1959-1965)**

Retirement has brought my golf handicap down to 8 from 11 in 2004. Achieved last 8 in Scotland in Daily Mail Golf doubles. Quantity of grandchildren to double in 2005 (to 2!)

#### **SHEINA WESTON (DONALDSON) (1944-1952)**

Ray and I have just returned from the 2005 FP Reunion and enjoyed meeting many friends. The only downside is I feel I am now very much among the oldest former pupils. We missed some of the usual familiar faces. I particularly enjoyed my tour around the old school. It was very kind of the present headmistress Marie, to give us so much of her time. I also heard a few stories I hadn't heard before!!! – Very happy days. We are having quite a hectic year with short breaks to various places. Just before the Reunion we had four days in Barcelona with our local Bridge Club. Our eldest son Ian and Heather live in London with their three children. Peter and Sharon, who live in Stamford, now have identical twin girls, aged seven months. Brian, our other son lives in Colchester. Apart from visiting them, we are going to France in May to visit Roy's brother and wife who live near Avignon. Again, many thanks to the committee for keeping the FP Society and magazine thriving.

## **NEW RECRUITS**

Terri Smith, 20 Lynstock Crescent, Nethybridge PH25 3DX – have been accepted into the Royal Navy. Will stay there for at least four years and then see where life takes me!

Andrew Ewen MacLennan, Glencarr, Dell Road, Nethybridge PH25 3DG – Going on to University of Stirling to study Mathematics.

Robert Wallace Laird, Holmlea, 1 Forest Road, Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3HE – Honours Degree in Popular Music.

Chloe Dickson, 2 Station Cottages, Dava, Grantown-on-Spey – Join the Army (not sure what career yet though).

Joe Tainsh, 12B Woodside Avenue, Grantown-on-Spey PH26 3JR – First of all going to University.

Alex Marr, 1 Woodpark, Woodside Avenue, Grantown-on-Spey – Law.

Katie Joanna McCreath, Ardavon, Nethybridge, Inverness-shire PH25 3DR – working in Business – maybe advertising.

Lauren Alexa Rattray, Kirkton Park, Lower Craggan, Grantown-on-Spey – To study at Stevenson College, Edinburgh. Degree in Foundation Art, Design & Photography. Folio year before deciding what I want to do next!

## **OBITUARY (We apologise for any omissions)**

Sympathetic mention to the following FP members:

Graham Grant on the death of his father Donnie.

Elizabeth McLeod (MacGregor) on the death of her sister Maisie Sutherland.

Iris McIntosh (Forbes) on the death of her mother Peggy Forbes.

Margaret Phillips (MacKenzie) on the death of her husband Marshall Phillips.

Joan Smith (Fraser) on the death of her husband Iain (see contribution)

Walter and Alex Ross on the deaths of sister Margaret and their mother Edith Cameron.

Christobel Bahzad (Terris) on the death of her sister Margaret Terris.

Margaret Ollason (Grant) on the death of her son Peter.

Ian MacPherson on the death of his father Ian, a long time member of the FP's and Old Guard Club.

Margaret Carstairs (McWilliam) on the death of her husband

## **MEMORIES OF IAIN SMITH (1932-2005) (Contributed by a friend Bruce Morgan)**

Many readers will already know that Iain Smith, known at school as “Steak”, died on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

Iain was born in Grantown-on-Spey on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1932. At school he was captain of his House and later, the school. A keen and able sportsman he captained the school football, cricket and athletic teams. Along with his teenage friends, Iain enjoyed “out of school” socialising in Bertie Grant’s Billiard Room where his talent also shone, causing the amusing comment that it was there he acquired his Higher Leaving Certificate!

On leaving school he looked to the Royal Navy for a future but the life didn’t suit him. National Service came along when he was drafted into “The Seaforths” and was based at Chepstow.

Following that, he returned to Grantown but failing to find satisfying employment in the town he loved, he tried for the London Metropolitan Police in 1955 and was accepted. The camaraderie of the job particularly suited him, making the next 28 years happy and fulfilling. Starting his police career in London’s East End, Iain had many fascinating stories of his experiences in this area. He also worked through the violent protests of the 60’s, including the Grosvenor Square Riots. The National Press at the time featured a photograph of him calmly carrying bottles of milk to assist a lady he escorted home through the mayhem.

In 1957 Iain married Joan Fraser, a fellow pupil of the Grantown Grammar School, and they set up home in North London. They had two of a family, Fraser and Joanne, who gave them four grandchildren. In 1991 Iain and Joan returned to the Highlands to make their holiday croft in Lentrane near Beaulieu, a permanent home for retirement. As a hobby, Iain had his own flock of sheep. Shepherding gave him the fresh air and exercise he enjoyed. He was a member of the Inverness Field Club and a keen supporter of Eden Court.

Although living away from Grantown for many years Iain was always interested in his home town, making many happy return visits and keeping up old friendships.

Sadly, he suffered from cancer in his last few years, braving his illness with courage and cheerfulness. The funeral service was in his church in Beaulieu, where he was an elder, and the interment was at Grantown New Cemetery.

### **Excerpt from a letter received by John Stuart From former Grantonian Frederick Lionel McMillan**

I am writing this letter out of the blue, as the saying goes, after so many years of no communication. Our generation in Grantown is getting sparse so it is nice to feel there is a few to remember and keep in touch with, old age does make us that bit more sentimental. I vaguely remember a short spell before the war when you associated with my brother Jimmie and I as boys. I also remember you after the war and how shattered you were after your horrific experience in the RAF so now in your present condition it is up to the country to look after you. John, I hope you will make some recovery from the injury to your spinal cord. I am not giving an impression of sophistication by typing this letter, the secret is I am a poor speller and this word processing system of computer does not allow wrong spelling. If I did this in long hand I would show my true failure from Grantown Grammar school. I am afraid old Tom Hunter and his crew did not do much for me. My wife, being of a considerably higher academic standard than me, passed her ability to our only daughter who has attained a degree Bachelor of Education Honours degree and has been teaching in schools in Germany and Hong Kong and in this country for over 30 years. It is 55 years since I left Grantown. One thing that has always amused me about our countrymen, that is, if a Scot emigrates to Canada

or Australia, or some such country, when he returns to Scotland he will most likely be greeted with an air of cordiality and some interest about where he lives, but if you have gone to England in so many cases you receive a rather flat response. However, I am not implying that is the attitude throughout but it is noticeably quite general. I think of Grantown as a nice little place to live but so like many other small towns for young school leavers the opportunities are very limited. I was in and out of work for three years after coming back from war service, until I got a rehabilitation course for engineering which I did in Glasgow. When that was completed I returned to Grantown and called in at the Labour Exchange to see Jim Winchester, who informed me that there was nothing he could offer in the engineering line, and his words were "to go south". There and then I asked him to phone the Labour Exchange in Devizes in Wiltshire where my wife came from, which he did and immediately he got me a position with what turned out to be a nice little engineering company. Things went well and I never looked back. The English people have always been receptive and sociable and after 18 years I had bought my own house and opened my own engineering shop which I called "Mechanical Services" and about the same time my wife took a lease on an Inn, so we sold our house and moved to the Inn where my wife mostly employed part time young married women who wanted a job with flexible hours. It was a very busy place where it took over 30 dinner, bed and breakfast customers every night. I retired in 1989 and sold out to a big Bristol company. We enjoyed our life and met lots of interesting and odd characters. We managed a holiday back to Grantown but we had never been overseas until after we retired so we went all out to see as much of the world as possible visiting Canada, Austria, Italy, France, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the Gambia in west Africa. In New Zealand we met an American lady who had the name Grant and had been to Grantown to trace ancestry whom she said lived on a farm near Carrbridge. In Vancouver we met a distant relative who produced a scroll on which was the McMillan family tree dating back to 1792. Another relative was Train whose mother was a McMillan and it turned out that his American father was a brother of Jack Train who acted the drunken colonel in the radio programme ITMA with Tommy Handley. He traced the McMillan line and gave me information which I had not the remotest knowledge of such as our great grandfather ran a horse bus service in Aberdeen running between such places as Aberchirder, Huntly, Turriff and several other villages which he started in about 1876 and married a Margaret McDougal. We now live in Weymouth which has a nice atmosphere and plenty going on. The British Legion parade held once a year is always a big affair with as many as five military bands, two of which are always pipe bands. It is not uncommon to see someone in the kilt on Weymouth streets and on odd occasions someone playing the bagpipes, so being right down on the south coast of England does not mean we lose all our Scottish touches. I do notice that the pipe bands always gets that little extra applause which is down to the swagger "O" the kilt, tartan and Scottish style.

Further letter and poem from Nancy Forsyth (Gray)

After 21 years we had our last “Open Day” and made £2,440 for our Church Fabric fund, towards new flooring for our Church hall which is well over 100 years old. It was great to see some Grantown people or should I say former school pupils who have promised to visit again when we can have a really good blether! This is a poem sent from a gentleman in Alford who was born in Avoch. It made our work all worthwhile.

#### JUST TO SAY THANKS

The Saltire’s proud at Aldernaig  
And proud will always be  
Of Nancy and Willie’s selfless work  
In aid of charity

There’s praise and admiration  
From all who come their way  
To enjoy their hospitality  
Of a special Open Day

A garden is a special place  
And they have made it fun  
To walk around, meet with friends  
And chat in the summer sun

There are stalls for cakes and bric a brac  
A friendly word or two  
Before you leave the garden  
There’s a plant that’s just for you

Friends have helped prepare a meal  
Something not to miss  
Visitors from far afield  
Still often talk of this

The use of Nancy and Willie’s house  
And the freedom of the grounds  
Has raised so much for charity  
At the price of just two pounds

Without a doubt the best two pounds  
You’ll likely ever spend  
But all good things as this we know  
Sadly come to an end

Nancy and Willie have now retired  
From their mammoth yearly task  
We appreciate what they have done  
And this is all we ask

Enjoy your home and garden  
And everything you do  
So many things have prospered  
All because of you

Don Patience (Donal Claimie)