

As fewer members are contributing any information or news, the Magazine is struggling to continue. Please put something on your return slips to enable us to survive. Best wishes to all F.P.s for 2013 and thank you for your donations. Look forward to as many as possible attending the Biennial Dinner.
Margaret Masson

COMMITTEE

President – Mrs Irene Carson

Honorary President – Mr Billy Templeton

Chairman – Mr Sandy McCook

Mrs Betty Grant, Mrs Shirley Findlay, Mr Stewart Grant, Mr Walter Dempster, Mr Ian Masson,
Mrs Janet Flannery, Mrs Seonaid Vickerman, Mrs Daphne Ritchie and Mrs Margaret Masson

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE STAFFROOM ON 26 NOVEMBER 2012

Present: Mrs Irene Carson, Mr Sandy McCook, Mrs Margaret Masson, Mrs Daphne Ritchie,
Mrs Betty Grant, Messrs Ian Masson, Stewart Grant and Walter Dempster
Apologies: Mrs Shirley Findlay, Mrs Janet Flannery and Mr Billy Templeton

The Chairman, Mr McCook, opened the meeting and welcomed all those attending. Minutes of the last meeting were read by Mrs Masson. Matters arising from the minutes were based around the future of the Club. How can we raise interest with (and therefore income from) present and past pupils? Input in the magazine from present pupils and inviting House Captains or School Captains to attend the Biennial Dinner were suggested. A Facebook page was also suggested but it was decided that we wouldn't go down that way, but a link to an FP section on the school website was possible. The Committee heard that one of our members, Ms Liza Stuart, spent last winter scanning all the old School and Former Pupils' Club magazines and these will be available as PDF files in the future. A launch for this was discussed and an assembly with senior pupils in the school on 23 April was proposed as was ways of protecting these files with passwords and obtaining funds from charging for the password! Mrs Ritchie is to contact Ms Stuart.

The Treasurer handed out the accounts and answered any questions. The accounts were proposed and seconded. Mr Alistair McKenzie was nominated as auditor again. It was noted that magazine sales and orders were down again but funds were being augmented as usual with generous donations. It was agreed that a smaller donation of £400 would be made to the School for prizes and the library but this could only continue with further donations from Former Pupils in future. It was put forward that another appeal be included in this year's magazine. Mrs Carson informed the Committee that Liza Stuart was making a donation to the school for an annual prize on behalf of her mum, Mrs Marion Stuart and in memory of her aunt, the former Honorary President of the Club, Miss Jean Paterson.

Venues were discussed for the Biennial Dinner in 2013. A sub-committee would organise the dinner. The Seaford Lodge Hotel and the Grant Arms Hotel would be approached for prices and availability on 29th March. Suggestions for speakers were discussed and one or two of them are to be approached. It was also decided to hold a raffle as at the previous dinner. Communication on these matters would take the form of emails rather than hold another meeting.

The Secretary, Mrs Masson, had finished typing the magazine but it still needed a cover, input from the school, the accounts, minutes from this meeting and the address list updated with changes. Mrs Ritchie was sourcing obituaries from the families of Dr Jimmy Allan and Mr Adrian Cooke.

The Chairman closed the meeting, thanking all members for attending.

Cover pictures – courtesy of GGS Art Department

ACCOUNTS

GRANTOWN GRAMMAR SCHOOL FORMER PUPILS' AND OLD GUARD CLUBS					
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT 2011-12					
2011 RECEIPTS		2012	2011	PAYMENTS	
£1,477.84	Balance - Deposit Account	£1,687.16	£500.00	School Donation - Library/Prizes	£500.00
£905.20	Balance - Flexible Savings Account	£906.11	£180.72	Postages (magazines and info slip mailing)	£236.61
£0.12	Interest - Deposit Account*	£0.00	£70.89	Photocopying	£83.65
£0.91	Interest - Flexible Savings Account	£0.91	£20.19	Envelopes and labels	£9.99
£144.00	Magazine Orders	£116.00	£20.00	Paper	£16.00
£174.00	Magazine Sales (including Grantown News)	£127.00	£860.00	Dinner for 44 (including gratuity and non-paying guests)	£0.00
£468.00	Donations	£405.00			
£20.00	New Recruits	£15.00			
£25.00	Tie Sales	£0.00			
£860.00	Dinner Tickets	£0.00	£1,687.16	Balance - Deposit Account	£1,503.91
£170.00	Raffle during dinner	£0.00	£906.11	Balance - Flexible Savings Account	£907.02
£4,245.07		£3,257.18	£4,245.07		£3,257.18

* TSB no longer paying interest on Deposit Accounts.

Audit Certificate: Audited from books and vouchers presented and found to be in agreement

Signed Alistair McKerril Print Name ALISTAIR MCKERRIL Date 4th December 2012

GRANTOWN GRAMMAR SCHOOL FORMER PUPILS' AND OLD GUARD CLUBS

2013 BIENNIAL REUNION DINNER – SATURDAY 23 MARCH 2013

THE SEAFIELD LODGE HOTEL, WOODSIDE AVENUE, GRANTOWN ON SPEY

7 pm for 7.30 pm

Members and Guests are requested to be seated promptly by 7.20 pm for a short General Meeting prior to the meal being served.

Tickets cost £28.50 each (including gratuity) and should be ordered from

Mrs Margaret Masson, Hon Secretary, 18 Macgregor Avenue, Grantown on Spey PH26 3ET

by Saturday 2th March

Raffle to be held on the night to raise funds

The winter rate for standard ensuite rooms is £70 per night based on two persons sharing including full Scottish breakfast, or £207.50 for 3 nights.

For overnight accommodation please contact the hotel directly.

Seafield Lodge Hotel
Woodside Avenue
Grantown on Spey
PH26 3JN

TEL: 01479 872152

Website: <http://www.seafielddodge.co.uk>

SHONA ANDERSON (MacDOUGALL) (1940-1953)

We were delighted to have our Australian family over for Christmas last year and to have a great family reunion on Christmas Day.

RORY ARMOUR (2003-2008)

Presently studying Applied Sport & Exercise Science at Robert Gordon's University, Aberdeen with part-time jobs at Blues Ski Shop and Sports Coaching Kids for Aberdeen Council. Sharing a house with John Edge and John Rutledge also ex-pupils from Grantown Grammar and enjoying life.

ELIZABETH BREMNER (MacKENZIE) (1942-1955)

Still busy – playing golf – singing – walking and gardening. Grand-children growing up very quickly. Now all the family are south of the border so we spend quite some time visiting Yorkshire and Northumberland

MARGARET CARSTAIRS (McWILLIAM) 1943-1953

Missed not being up north this year but my sister enjoyed the F.P. Reunion and Billy Laing who gave talk was in same class as me at school. I have another two great grand daughters, one born in February called Kyra and three weeks later one called Alyx. Kept busy now but keep getting their names mixed up. Thanks so much to the committee for their good work – much appreciated.

MRS R JOHN CHAPMAN (ELIZABETH McDONALD) 1947-1959

Our second grandson was born in London at the end of December 2011. The family are moving back to New Zealand to live by the end of 2012. Our daughter, aged 46, died in early August 2012.

MAJOR JOHN CLARK (1949-1959)

Still living in retirement in Inverness, enjoying golf and gardening.

ROSEMARY M CHARLISH (MASSON)

Loved having all the family home for last Christmas and New Year. Missed them terribly when they went back to Vietnam and Australia especially my little granddaughters. Looking forward to spending Christmas and New Year in Vietnam with daughter Kayleigh.

WILMA COWAN (IRVING) (1942-1954)

Had a very enjoyable week last year in Inverness and Grantown to celebrate our Golden Wedding. Great to meet up with Jean and Grant Ross and Margaret Masson again. Looking forward to becoming great Grandparents in November. Had a cataract removed in July – things looking much brighter now. Enjoy reading the contributions from other F.Ps. Well done, committee, on all your hard work in keeping the magazine going.

WALTER DEMPSTER

Another year has gone very quickly – with increasing age they seem to fly past faster than ever. It has been busy but was there anything out of the usual? We were very pleased when Walter, our older son, graduated BSc Hons in April and we were delighted to attend the ceremony in the Concert Hall in Glasgow.

Gary's web site has proved to be popular with golfers all over the world, and his collection of golfing memorabilia is said to be one of the best in private hands. It is still growing. For those of you interested go to "Scottish Golf Museum" and browse. He is now living in Ayrshire.

We still walk Sam the dog daily and find that very enjoyable. The U3A and the Grantown Society are most interesting and there we see friends from way back. We still make an annual pilgrimage to

Orkney as we like the Orcadians so much. Anne goes away with three colleagues she started training with over 50 years ago, which is fine as I am really a home bird.

Recently the Strathy printed a photo of Rothiemurchus pupils taken not long after the last war. After all these years we remember classmates who also are no longer with us. It got me reminiscing. In those days we had great respect for the teachers, maybe almost a fear, both in Primary and Secondary. In Grantown we would get out of line at our peril with Tom Hunter, Doc Bain, Miss Grant and others and I am sure we were the better of it. Again these were all older members of staff. In fact the only younger one if I am correct was Elsie McIntosh, games mistress with the girls. The boys in my time had Bill Liddell and Jimmy Cullen.

How times have changed. I meet up twice a year in the Inverurie area with other head teachers (dominies in Doric) and not one has the slightest regret at leaving the profession, ever wants to enter the school doors again and does not recommend the job to any aspiring teacher. How sad. The ever increasing amount of paper work, harassment from parents and the negative attitude of so many pupils have taken their toll. There are however many excellent youngsters who work hard and are a credit to their school. The old Lochgelly was removed and a corrective smack frowned on and since then verbal and physical abuse of teachers has been increasing year by year. We would not have gone home and told we had been punished or we would have received even more. How often do we hear now of parents charging down to their school to tell staff how their little child is such an angel and would never do anything untoward, but if he or she did then it must have been the teacher's fault. Have I chip on my shoulder? Conversations with retired and still practising teachers have convinced me that I am not alone.

I am enjoying life in the Strath and can hardly believe we have been back in Rothiemurchus almost 8 years. We have lunch with Angus Mackintosh in Aviemore every week but it would be nice to meet up with more old classmates. My e-mail address is

We are all grateful to Margaret and Daphne for all the hard work which goes into the magazine. I certainly look forward to the next issue to see how old friends are faring.

FIONA DONN (1955-1962)

Life continues much as ever. Nothing very different – apart from the fact that Father died (almost 104) last September. As Deirdre and I had visited his care home every day for 2 hours twice a day to feed him (he'd been forgotten so often). We did this for over 5 years so it took us some time to adapt to a changed routine. I am still occupied with a variety of activities at my church – Grayfriars Free Church. I teach a little patchwork and quilting class to raise funds for the F.C. Women's for Mission project. Gardening and knitting also are enjoyed although this summer's poor weather didn't do the gardening any favours and so much was spoiled. I do wish the magazine every success and look forward to receiving my copy.

SHIRLEY A FINDLAY (MASSON)

Work, work, work and child-minding my little grandson, Bradley, a few times in the week. Looking forward to a new grandchild in February.

JANET FLANNERY (LAING)

Still very busy doing some local charity work but enjoying it very much. Have two lovely grand daughters, which keeps me busy as well. Best wishes for 2013.

ELSPETH FRASER (MITCHELL) (1935-1947)

Enjoyed meeting so many folks I knew when at the Probus meeting in the Grant Arms Hotel on 19th October. Not too keen on driving nowadays – but hope to be at the reunion.

ROBIN FRASER (1951-1957)

Items of interest – (1) diagnosed with Parkinson's Syndrome in February '12, but so far medication working well. (2) celebrated our Golden Wedding in September '12 – so great to have the family together. Did not reach Strathspey for a break in 2012, but hopefully next year, when I hope the summer, weather-wise, will be a big improvement. All the best to everyone in 2013.

ALLAN GRANT (1956-1968)

Just a short piece of news for magazine this year. Was back in Scotland in February as my dad Martin Grant passed away. I'm still teaching PDHPE and music and still enjoying it so will continue for a few more years although Diane has already retired. We are busy renovating a place on the coast about an hour and a half out of Sydney in preparation for full retirement down the track. At the moment it is just a weekender and holiday house opposite Tuggerah Lake where I attempt to catch a few fish!

ALEC GRANT

Still the same as last year. Life's pretty good

GRAHAM GRANT

It's been some time since I contributed to the magazine – I could quote any number of excuses (not enough time, forgot, etc) but none of them would be true. Laziness, sloth and prevarication are the real reasons!

Life has been pretty good to me and my family in recent times. We're still living in Invergordon – I've lived here for 27 years now and I'm almost a local (Invergordon is no different to Grantown in that sense). I'm still working for the Port Authority, although I'm now the Assistant Operations Manager. I'm still married to Siobhan – we celebrated our Silver Wedding anniversary last week. I still have 2 children (Chris who's now 20 and Margaret who's 17) who I haven't shamed into disowning me (yet). So all in all nothing much has changed except for the signs of fast approaching middle-age (which I believe is supposed to start at 55) which I really do not want to discuss in detail. I was promoted into my present role with the Port Authority 2 years ago. It's basically an Assistant Harbourmaster's role for which I have been striving to achieve for many years. It made me reflect on an "interview"! I had with now defunct Strathspey Round Table way back in 1979. I needed £300 to pay for uniform and workwear for my upcoming Merchant Navy career. At that time the Round Table gave what they classed as bursaries to young people to help with their future careers. I shall be eternally grateful to them for granting me the money and therefore would have enjoyed sharing my thanks and experience with them.

I gave up the Pipe Band drumming a couple of years ago – I could quote laziness, sloth and prevarication again, but the real reason is more to do with a couple of spinal operations which is related more to advancing middle-age!

Mum and brother Mike and his family are still Grantown residents so we enjoy frequent trips to Grantown to Beachan Court to see them all. Judy is now a resident of Inch in Aberdeenshire and enjoying the rural lifestyle.

I hope all the old classmates are doing well – I've been in touch with a couple of them via Facebook and Friends Reunited in recent years. If anyone would like a cuppa or catch up in Invergordon (I know there are frequent visitors to see some of the liners) please contact me via email.

SALLY GREENLEES (1964-1976)

Another busy year. Emma and Fraser have just started in 3rd year. I am now married to a pensioner – Gordon completed 30 years with Northern Constabulary in September. We all had most enjoyable day in June attending my nephew Matthew's wedding at Advie, celebrating his marriage to Harriet Kirkwood.

GRACE HARRISON (1942-1944)

Such a long time ago but I have warm memories of Latin classes with Mr Thornton and English Literature with Mr Morrison.

GILLIAN HENDERSON (1956-1962)

Thanks to Margaret Masson visiting us in Fremantle, W.A., some time ago. I now have good connections with the GGS Magazine. Katie our daughter (23) now living in Canada and working on ski lifts having finished University in Perth W.A. Hamish our son (20), on exchange to Berkeley University in California for a year. Husband, Richard and I and the family, have been back in Grantown often in the last few years and we spent as much time with Dr Janet as we were able before she died in August this year (2012). We are grateful to all the people who farewelled her at the Old Kirk at Nethybridge – she will be greatly missed.

P.A.M HIGGINS (MacPHERSON) (1949-1956)

Another year of ill-health and not firing on all cylinders! (Hope health improves, Pam)

ANDREW HOWLETT (1951-1957)

Hazel and I enjoyed a visit to Paralympics swimming and the Olympic Park – wonderful. Brother Duncan Howlett's new address is - Fergus House, Fergus Place, Dyce, Aberdeen AB21 7DD where he will always welcome a visit.

D M MARR ILLINGWORTH

Unable to do anymore!

STEPH LAWRENCE (2002-2006)

Going nowhere fast!!

JANE LILLEY (MACAULAY) (1965-1971)

Enjoying our grandson Calum (born June 2011) who, with his parents, Andrew and Sarah, moved from Edinburgh to Inverness this year. Meanwhile, if all goes well, we should be addressing daughter Alison as "Doctor" by the end of the year, as she has just about completed her PH.D in Parasitology.

ELIZABETH MARGARET McLELLAND (LAWRENCE) (1947-1952)

Both grandchildren now at High School. I didn't manage a holiday this year as I had a fall and fractured my left hip in July. Van still manage to hobble around. Am currently waiting to have an operation on my left hand to repair arthritic wrist and severed tendons. I'll soon be like a bionic woman. Enjoyed last year's magazine – it was interesting to see a copy of the old school timetable. A lot easier to comprehend than the modern version. Now that summer has bypassed us this year I hope 2013 will be an improvement.

JAMES MacDONALD (1943-1945)

The highlight of 2011 was the birth of our great grandson. Makes you feel old! A cruise round the Baltic refreshed memories of fourteen years past when we first went there. Then St Petersburg was one huge slum (apart from the museums). Now it is very different and a place well worth visiting. Ypres and the first War Graves was on the itinerary and found to be very moving. My father was at the battle of Mons and must have been where we were. Autumn has reached the South East of England and already I have started assisting in showing programmes for the University of the Third Age. Next adventure is a river cruise down the Danube from Nuremberg to Budapest. Hope to report on that next year.

IRIS McINTOSH (FORBES) (1948-1961)

Checking the calendar this morning I realised it was time to send a contribution to this year's magazine. A relatively quiet year in the McIntosh household due in no small measure to our Westie, Corrie, who is still to the fore requiring the same TLC he did last year. This has confined us to barracks somewhat but that is the price to pay for being a pet owner and we do not mind as he has given us so much pleasure over the years. On saying that we did visit Canada last September spending a week on Vancouver Island and a week in Toronto with friends who live in the area. In May of this year we travelled to St David's in south Wales and had a great stay there, despite the weather and £50 parking fine!! We also had a new kitchen installed in March during the wonderful weather we enjoyed then – thank goodness is all I can say, as the back door had to be removed to allow the workmen to take the units in and out, but never again. I was exhausted by the end of it all! In spite of my attempts (still on-going) to get rid of one item of clutter per day, I seem to have achieved very little success, with the kitchen anyway!! At present we are looking forward to a three week holiday in the States – Arizona and New Mexico – during September/October. We may see a little of the sun which has been so scarce in Scotland so far in 2012. Wishing those who put our magazine together all the very best now and in the future – you do a sterling job and long may you continue to do so.

ALAN McTAGGART (1951-1955)

The McTaggart clan has not had a good year and we were down to three brothers when Michael passed away in his sleep after a trip to USA to attend a wedding in December 2011. Then we are down to two in March 2012 when Hamish succumbed to a leukaemia type problem that he fought for three years. So Donald and I are planning to have a get together in December this year to remember our brothers while we can. Not that we are admitting to slowing down that much but age does take its toll. On to a personal level the bucket list is shrinking as we (Desma and I) took two weeks to tour to Melbourne to celebrate the arrival of twins to my son Steven's wife, Cassie, to make their family count 4, all under 5, and making my GC count up to 12. We travelled on to Alice Springs on the Ghan train (recommended) and coach toured to Uluru and King's Canyon and more. Missed the summer heat but our days hit the mercury at 36 deg. C and was enough for us. Best wishes to all who may have memories to share of good times at School (not many!) and great times using the education that was later much appreciated.

GORDON MacGREGOR 1938-1951

Retired 1995. Rector of Alyth High School. I am proud to have won the Cairngorm Badge (pour le Merite) in fifth year and was the 19th in past 14 years. The Scottish Fiddle Orchestra is now in its 33rd year and has raised well over a million pounds for charity. I am therefore still on the "fiddle" and continuing to play for charity events. My son, Ewan, is still successfully in his computer and PR business. My daughter Lynn, Head of Home Economics (Blair High School), is a member of the SQA team and has now written a book relevant to the Curriculum for Excellence. It is now available in the shops. Grandchildren: - Kirsty, still has her media business in Glasgow. Nicola is reading maths in Baldrigon Academy, Dundee. Gordon is now 2nd chef at Gleneagles Hotel. Lyndsey has now graduated in "Food and Nutrition" and is now in teaching myself and Marjory. Are delighted to still have Ivy Bank and continue our interest in Grantown. The family love to pay visits to the town.

GILBERT MACKAY (1949-1956)

Delighted to have made brief email contact over the past year (56 years after leaving P.7) with Bill Reid, Pam (MacPherson) and Lyndsey (Stephen) Napier. We are looking forward to meeting Lindsey and her husband at the end of September. Photo below – Neilston & District Pipe Band (2nd left)



IAN D MASSON

Very pleased to have finally moved into our new house. Plenty room and freedom for the girls, who are growing up so fast. Still have a lot of outside work to do but will probably have to wait for the spring and hopefully drier weather.

MARGARET J MASSON (STUART)

Had a lovely holiday in Portugal with family in June – so nice to get some sun! Still keeping Ian and Fraser in order in the garage. Love meeting all the customers. Had a few visits from F.P.s this summer. Jimmy Thomson and his wife, Davis Robertson (Thomson) and her grand daughter, also Ian Ritchie (formerly Boat of Garten) and Walter Ross.

WILLIAM A MITCHELL (BILL)

In November 2011 we downsized into a smaller house and more importantly, a much smaller garden. We now enjoy sitting in the garden, instead of forever working in it! You'll see from the address that we haven't moved far.

MRS ANN MURRAY (STEWART) (1960-1965)

Continue to enjoy retirement – but seem to get busier and busier! Brother James is living and working in Perth, Australia for 2/3 years – home for Christmas and New Year then back again. Saw Kate Brown (Miller) and Carol Beckett (Stuart) in June when we had a trip to Bruges – great to catch up with all the news.

MRS MONA RAE (GRANT) (1951-1964)

Having completed a full year of retirement I have to say I have not missed work at all! I spend a lot of time back at the farm helping Heather. By the time this goes to print she should have had my third grandchild and her little girl, Amber, will have a brother or sister. Baby-sitting is a full time job and keeps me fit – I think!

DAPHNE RITCHIE (DUNCAN) (1964-1977 or so!)

Here I am at the last minute ("Nothing new there!" says Spouse over my shoulder). Margaret has passed on the magazine for printing and I've still to update the address list and see about a front cover – see Art Dept tomorrow... The accounts are at the auditor - I ran along the road in my new snow boots to Alistair McKenzie with them yesterday (ex History teacher with accountancy training). And I sort of promised a page or two in the magazine on GGS Successes! Oh dear! We had a committee meeting last week to discuss the next dinner – provisional date 23 April, so we'll need the minutes from the meeting and some arrangements finalised before I organise the photocopying! Help! And we have a busy week - tomorrow is the 40th anniversary of the Heather Centre, so we've an invitation to a party in the evening. Wednesday is the S1 Parents' night. Friday is the Staff Christmas night out at the Grant Arms. On Saturday it's been suggested, by big sis, Dianne, that I do my clown act at her grand-daughter's third birthday party in Rothienorman Village Hall. I thought I'd finished with all that when my nephews stopped having birthday parties about eight or nine years ago. On Sunday we're taking Spouse's mum to Elgin for Christmas shopping. And school work? Preparing lessons all the time for my first and second year IT classes using Microsoft Office 2010 (all new materials needed), a new broad general education for third years – one class in IT and Admin and one in Business and Enterprise, as well as teaching a Higher and Int 2 Business Management class and a PC Passport class with senior pupils from Access 3 level to Higher. Busy? A wee bit! The year has gone flying past – holidays in Belgium and France in October, visiting Bruges, Paris, Rheims and parts of the Somme - the South African Memorial near Longueval, which commemorates the intense action of the South African Troops in Delville Wood and other WW1 museums and tunnels – all really interesting. The summer holidays passed quickly with visits to Dundee and St Andrews and to celebrate Mum's 80th birthday, the whole family had a beautiful lunch in the Grant Arms before niece Cara was too pregnant to visit Grantown (healthy baby boy, Jamie John Brooks), some of us went on a boat trip in the Moray Firth to see the dolphins (successful!) and Mum and I went travelled south to Glorious Goodwood (not so successful!). Golf and the garden were squeezed in as usual and I made a big mistake of buying a greenhouse in the spring. Great plans to sit in there on bonny days, however, no time to do so... Had to water the plants therein instead but have ended up with a good crop of courgettes, leeks, kale and parsley! Finally, last weekend was a trip to Aberdeen, staying in the Treetops (courtesy of my Tesco vouchers) and met up with a group of lovely Tongan men (one of whom - the Prop, number 3, name unpronounceable, lifted me up to his shoulder with one arm and told me I was as light as a feather – sigh...). Woops, still to order 500 polystyrene cups for the School Show, Singing in the Rain, for the last week of term – another wee job, organising teas for the intervals... Right, back to the address list for the magazine...

DAVIS ROBERTSON (THOMSON) (1951-1964)

Life as a retiree is ever more hectic between grandchildren, bowls and church activities! However, I managed to fit in two very interesting holidays over the past year. In November I enjoyed a trip to the Canadian Rockies and an Alaskan cruise. The scenery was quite spectacular. In May I then went out to the Far East, doing a whistlestop tour of China, which included Shanghai, Xi'an and Beijing. The visit to the Terra Cotta Warriors exceeded all expectations as did the Great Wall, where I spent my 66th Birthday.

Brother Jim and Barbara paid me a visit at the beginning of August and we managed an overnight in Grantown, accompanied by my granddaughter. We enjoyed the visit apart from only meeting up with ONE kent face, Margaret Masson! We also had a visit from Wilma (Watt)'s granddaughter, who was here competing at various highland dancing events.

CARL & LAURA J STEWART (FINDLAY)

Kept busy at the Craig MacLean Sports Centre in Grantown but due to a new arrival in February will finish in beginning of January. Not sure what Bradley will have to say about a little brother or sister

and in due course have to share his toys! Granny and granddad are going to be busy with two grandchildren.

ALEX ROSS (1950-1960)

I must apologise for not returning my slip earlier. It completely slipped my mind. I expected to meet you at the Nethy Games as usual, but maybe the shock of it actually being sunny was too much for you to take! The Games were very good and we also took in the Grantown Show and Thunder in the Glen, which was quite a spectacle.

We have been to and fro to Nethy several times this year as Dot's aunt was very poorly before finally passing away in June. It is nice to be able to simply get in the car and go rather than wait for holiday time, but of course grandchildren seem to make as many, if not more, demands on our time than our own kids ever did or so it seems.

We have been away getting some sun earlier in the year and it looks like we will have to do so in the next few months as cooler weather is fast approaching.

ELIZABETH SHOESMITH (STUART) (1960-1972)

At the time of writing we are just starting the preparations for Mum's 100th birthday party which will be celebrated in Grantown at the Heritage. Although Ann and Rita have just spent the summer at home the whole family should be gathering at the end of October.

My mother continues to do well after her broken hip and really manages to do everything for herself except remember things. She is out for a walk most days though has no sense of how powerful the wind can be some days.

I was saddened by the sudden death of Adrian Cooke this summer following on from James Coueslant and Kenny Finlayson last year. My own health continues to limit me considerably but seems to be stable if I avoid doctors! Strangely none of us has managed to pass on our genes – all that talent gone to waste!

I've really enjoyed the cultural side of the Olympics without leaving the fireside. I'm sorry to say school Shakespeare was dire though I'm told Mr & Mrs Thomson spent every summer at Stratford he never managed to enthuse me. I loved the modern take on Julius Caesar and the history plays that followed. My Kindle has been a revelation. No longer do I have to worry that the print will be too small. In the first year I have read twenty seven books including non-fiction history and historical and crime novels. I wait impatiently for new releases from my favourite authors. My niece tells me that Aberdeen University no longer requires Higher English to get into medicine, which seems a drop in standards too far.

My other labour of love in the last year has been digitising the school magazines, which have a wealth of local history information and soon to be available online. My mother often picks one up and I collect the gems she remembers prompted by photos or names.

JOHN FLAVELL SMITH (1970-1976)

I have just returned back to paid employment after a space of 17 years, working for a Houston, Texas-based geophysical instrument company that is in the same space as my company, which I sold a few years back. Having started as a consultant to the company, they have now asked me to take responsibility for their Eastern Hemisphere operations (which is a grandiose term for anything that is not in the Americas), so I am getting sucked in, having thought that I could take it easy now! My oldest daughter Holly has left school and is in Australia taking a gap year before heading off to Uni. My middle daughter Iona is involved in a range of sporting and artistic pursuits and Peter our youngest was in Cameron MacIntosh's Oliver! over the summer and most recently in Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat, both at the Edinburgh Playhouse. He is very keen on his ski-racing but is a turncoat, training with Scottish Ski Club rather than my old club Cairngorm Ski Club! So we have the weekly long drive from Edinburgh up to Cairngorm to look forward to over the winter!

Recent events in Burma (or Myanmar, if you prefer) covered in the news have taken me back to my youth in Grantown and the strong links that the central character has with the town. In 1973, when I was 15 or so, my family was introduced to another family who had a holiday house down at Spey Bridge. Their son was an Oxford Don, who was carrying out research in Bhutan and was home on leave with his Burmese wife. This couple befriended by older brother who was of a similar age to them and also an intellectual.

We got to know the people quite well and as a rather gauche, self-conscious teenager I particularly remember meeting the beautiful Burmese lady. She happily took the time to talk to me and tell me about her life in Bhutan and what a fascinating country it was to live in. I always remembered this lady and to an extent she inspired my love of travel, which during my working life has taken me to many parts of the globe, especially southeast Asia.

At the time my brother had mentioned that the lady's late father had been a political leader in Burma but this meant little to me then. It was only some years later, when Aung San Suu Kyi came to the public eye and was placed under arrest that I realised that this was "The Lady".

Her husband was Michael Aris, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Aris. Some folk will remember the family, I'm sure.

MARION STUART (1917-1929 as pupil)

Celebrated her 100th birthday in October.

THOMAS B STUART (1937-1950)

Racked my brains to think of something interesting and exciting to say. Failed!! Became an octogenarian and great grandfather this year, but do not feel any different from last year. I still make the odd visit to Grantown to see my sister Helen who is a resident in Grandview House Nursing Home but never meet anyone I know. Not surprising really as it is over 60 years since I left. We are off to Kenya on holiday later this year so perhaps I may have something to write about next year.

MAREE THOMPSON

I can't believe it has been a year already since I last put in my FP news.

So a year on since my last update and it's been a pretty horrendous year. It began with me inadvertently poisoning myself, shortly followed by Olivia having a tantrum induced accident with boiling water and requiring a donor skin graft on her stomach and a week in hospital, but thanks to a very talented plastic surgeon – has healed beautifully. It was probably more traumatic for Mum, Dad, Granny and our visitors – Pamela McKenzie, her new hubby and son Matthew and less so for the baby.

We, (Vic and myself) still haven't got around to getting married! The bathroom is nearly finished, the attic/loft conversion is nearly finished. Olivia is growing and developing quickly and has reached the terrible twos far too fast! But it's entertaining.

It's been a hectic year on the work front too, still with Vodafone – major deal closed and a lot of business travel – Tel Aviv, Israel, Miami, FLA, TX, Montreal, Canada and potentially back to Tel Aviv in October and I might manage to squeeze in business trips to London and Prague before Christmas.

I'm going back to school to study for a Law degree part time – it's 6 years study next to full time work and a family – it will be challenging if Olivia doesn't want to go to bed at regular hours – but I'm sure I will squeeze it all in!

We went to Pamela McKenzie's wedding in October in Elgin, and caught up with Kirsty McPherson and a few weeks later also lucky to have visitors come a long way for their tea on their tour of Benelux – Daphne and Stephen Ritchie and Stella and Alistair McKenzie. Strange how it goes – you don't see people for 10 years then see them 3 times in the space of 6 months.

Kind regards, Maree

SHEINA WESTON (DONALDSON) (1944-1951)

Like everyone else we have moaned about a bad summer, but have made the most of the good days spending lots of time working in the garden, as the rain seems to have made the plants grow twice as big as usual. However we did have a beautiful day on 27th July 2012, not just the opening ceremony of the Olympics, but our Golden Wedding Anniversary. We had a celebration with the family and friends at a nearby hotel. Our grandchildren range from 8-18 years and the eldest has just taken his A levels and been offered a place at Oxford University, like his Dad before him. Since then we have had a trip to Dublin with our U3A group. It was our first visit to Southern Ireland and we found everyone very friendly and helpful. I look forward to the magazine bringing me up to date with news from Grantown, and then the F.P. Reunion of 2013.

HERBERT JOHN WRIGHT (1933-1941)

You know you are getting old, when young people (anyone under 50) call you Sir, and hold doors for you. When I was reminded that my older son would be 60 next week, it was something of a shock, to have to accept that if he is 60, then I have to be... um... well on the way to being 89! So I am not so young as I used to be... it doesn't help when one's family doctor talks about your aches and pains as "age related".

Anyway here I am, surviving with the aid of a microwave oven, a can opener and regular visits from an invaluable cleaning lady, who goes through the apartment like a whirlwind, polishing everything in sight, while dispensing useful bits of advice on various domestic matters.

I have lived in the city of Cambridge (note: not a city by UK definition) since I retired in February 1990. Shona and I owned a bungalow until 2004 when we moved into the condominium apartment block at the address you have. It is small, as apartments go, only 29 apartments of various sizes. It would be politically incorrect to designate it as a seniors' building, but the resident owners do all they can to keep it that way! The youngest owner is on the wrong side of 55 and our oldest inhabitant (out on his bicycle at the moment) is 91. He spent his 91st birthday walking on the Great Wall of China. There is an underground garage, for which we offer heartfelt thanks every winter, and most residents are still driving. Ontario residents undergo a written examination every two years after you reach 80, with an automatic road test if you fail, or if you have accumulated demerit points.

The business affairs of the building are overseen by a small board of directors (guess who is currently the chairperson). Everyone seems to be compatible, and various owners arrange card parties, lunches, coffee parties etc. We have two general meetings per year, when the board reports to the assembled owners... it is always well attended, perhaps because we have a little wine and cheese party at the conclusion.

Most of us enjoy eating out (who doesn't) and we are well served with a variety of eating places. There is also a group who like live theatre, and there we are well served in that we have several community theatres, plus the major centre in Stratford, within an hour's drive. At the moment a 500 seat theatre is under construction, in Cambridge, not ten minutes away. Some money for this project was advanced by the city council, much to the disgust of those who felt another hockey rink should be built! All in all life is good. It's not the same without Shona, but one makes the best of it.

NEW RECRUITS

Stewart MacPherson

David Ritchie

Rory Armour

OBITUARY (with apologies for any omissions)

Sympathetic mention to the following F.P.s:

Elizabeth Chapman (McDonald) on the death of her daughter

Elizabeth Main (MacGillivray) on the death of her husband Donald

D M Marr Illingworth on the death of his brother George

Gillian Henderson on the death of her mother Dr Janet

Alan Grant and Chrissie Grant on the death of Martin who was a long time committee member for the F.P. and Old Guard Clubs

The McTaggart family on the deaths of their brothers, Michael and Hamish

Sadly have also been informed of the following deaths of Former Pupils:

Dr James Allan, Old Guard member (contribution from his daughter Catriona)

3/12/15-21/4/12

Dr Jimmy Allan, who died on 21st April, 2012 aged 96, was a descendant of a long line of Strathspey farmers. Jimmy was born and brought up at Ballintomb Farm, Dulnain Bridge, where his father, Donald M. Allan, was a well-known and highly regarded breeder and judge of Aberdeen Angus cattle. Jimmy's paternal grandparents had farmed at Tomdhu, by Nethy Bridge and his maternal grandparents at Tullochgribban and Inverlaidnan, near Carrbridge.



Ballintomb, and indeed Strathspey, were in Jimmy's heart and soul throughout his entire life. As he so often said, he enjoyed the happiest of childhoods there with his brother Ian and sisters Isobel, Moira and June. Initially he attended Dulnain School, graduating to Grantown School at the age of eight. He completed the final two years of his school education as a boarder at Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh.

He then studied medicine at Edinburgh University and, following graduation and the onset of World War Two, he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. As a result of a bomb exploding in close proximity, Jimmy's hearing was severely impaired. Following the war, he was working as a locum GP in Grantown when, in June 1946, at a Victory Ball in the Grant Arms Hotel, he met his future wife, Margaret Morrison, who lived at Mahableshtar (now Dar-il-hena) in Grant Road with her parents. They were married in the town's St Columba's Church five months later.

In 1947, they bought a house and medical practice in Edinburgh and developed it into the largest single-handed practice in the city. Jimmy is still remembered with enormous affection and esteem by his many grateful patients.

Every year, together with Jimmy and Margaret's three children, Donald, Hamish and Catriona, all family holidays were spent at Dulnain Bridge and Grantown. To begin with, until 1958, the family holidayed at Ballintomb Cottage, which had been built as a summer house by Jimmy's father shortly before the onset of World War One. In fact, Jimmy appeared on BBC Reporting Scotland in September 2007 during a feature about the sale of Ballintomb Cottage.

Following the death of Jimmy's father, Jimmy and Margaret bought a cottage in Woodside Avenue, Grantown in 1960. They had many friends and family in and around Grantown, and holidays there in Easter and summer were the highlight of the family's year. Over 50 years later, this cottage, Craigallan, is still owned and regularly used by the family. Since Jimmy's birth in 1915 until his

death in April 2012, a year never elapsed without time spent in Grantown. Latterly, he loved holidays there with his grandchildren, teaching them to play golf and laying treasure hunts for them in Anagach Woods.

At the age of 10, Jimmy joined Grantown Golf Club and so began a lifelong passion for the game. He was an extremely accomplished player with a very low handicap, the winner of many championships, whose ability to regularly drive the ball straight was legendary. He remained an excellent player into old age and even managed to beat his age on several occasions. Jimmy was made an honorary member of Grantown Golf Club.

Jimmy's other great interest and skill was bridge. He was a well-known, admired and accomplished player, representing Scotland internationally and winning numerous national trophies over the years. He was a very popular player, a well-known bridge journalist writing of him in a book on Scottish Bridge: - "An exceptionally fine performer, he was renowned for his courtesy to partners and opponents, and a pleasure to welcome to your table. He acted as a roving bridge ambassador, taking teams North to play friendlies. Jimmy was always a gentleman at the table, an example to us all." Ten years ago he gave a talk in the village hall on the history of Dulnain Bridge. He was proud of being a 'Dulnain boy': playing for the Dulnain Dandies (the local football team), learning to swim in the Laundry Pool on the River Dulnain, sledging at top speed down the Finlarig brae, helping on the farm at Ballintomb and playing in the Primrose Wood below Easter Laggan. Even into his nineties, his zest for life was still there: his charm, his mischief and the twinkle in his eyes never really left him. Jimmy was particularly proud of the remarkable and extensive research into both sides of his family tree carried out by his wife Margaret over many years. As a result, he discovered even more relations throughout Strathspey and the surrounding areas, and indeed the world.

Margaret predeceased Jimmy in 2009. Sadly, Jimmy's health deteriorated during March and April of 2012, and he died peacefully with his family beside him. He is survived by Donald, Hamish and Catriona and six grandchildren, regular visitors to the cottage in Grantown.

Jimmy so often said how very fortunate he had been throughout his life, but particularly in the start he had been given: being born, educated and brought up in, as he put it, "The most beautiful place in the world". He is buried in the family grave in Grantown New Cemetery.

James B MARSHALL Homefield, Heathfield Road, Grantown on Spey

Williamina Ritson (Keith) (Contribution from her daughter)

Mrs Ritson died on July 2012 at the age of 92 as a result of Alzheimers.

She went to the Grammar School for all of her education (approximately 1925 to 1940) and she was apparently an excellent student as we still have many awards (books) presented to her during those years. She lived in Birchview Terrace and was the youngest of the 8 Keith children. She met my father Myles Ritson, when he came to town with the Army during the war. They were married in Inverallan Church in '49. I remember spending all my summers and most Sundays with my Grandmother and Auntie Elsie at Birchview Terrace. I have many, many happy memories of those times in Grantown. Our family then immigrated to Vancouver, Canada in December of 1957.

My Mom used to eagerly anticipate the arrival of your magazine each year to keep up to date with all her friends. She also made several trips "home" over the years to connect with family and friends.

My father passed away in May 2006 after 62 years of marriage! Mom is survived by myself, Agnes Fletcher and my sister Linda Wood and our spouses as well as four grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Morna Speer (Mackenzie) (contribution from her eldest son)

Morna passed away on 27th April this year. She was born in January 1937, so you can probably work out which years she attended the school, although she missed some of her later years as she was in hospital with several bouts of TB in her teenage years.

She died at the age of 75 of a very strong and sudden heart attack, but up until that day was leading a very wonderful and active life. She was quite a successful writer, having had several poems published and had also written a children's book and was in the process of writing a very deep philosophical book about how we can all live to make the world a better and more peaceful place.

She was well travelled and had just booked a solo trip to Paris to see an exhibition at the Louvre and was planning to travel to Zanzibar later on in the year when she died.

She had just become a grandmother for the first time with me just having had a baby boy, Max in February and she took to it brilliantly, having almost given up hope that either me or my brother would have children. Funnily enough, my brother Hugo, is also now having a child next February as well and our children will very much enjoy all the children's books that she had collected over the years. My brother Hugo is the famous TV, film and stage actor Hugo Speer and Morna greatly enjoyed seeing his successful career and meeting many of the other famous people with whom he works.

My brother and I have recently scattered her ashes in the woods at the back of Grantown with her sisters.



Photograph sent in by Liza Shoesmith (Stuart). She thinks it was her mum's Primary 5 class (1940-41).

John Duncan Raymond Philip
Alister Mason Jas Bair
Harriet Duncan Wm Kellas
Ernest McIntosh
Ian Davie Jr Johnson John Irving
Ian Fraser G. Anderson
Arthur James Douglas Livingston
Robert Lawson Ian Berrie Bertha Hay
Peter Macgregor Sandy Grant
Wm Kent.

The GGS Grapevine - November

(News, Success and Learning from Grantown Grammar School)

Welcome to this month's news page where we hope to try to keep the whole of our learning community up-to-date with all of the exciting news and opportunities for young people at Grantown Grammar School.

Curriculum Focus: Technical

Each month we will give you an update about some of the exciting things that have been going on in the school in different curriculum areas – this month (with a bit of arm twisting!) it's the turn of the Technical Department.

Real Skills for Work, Life and Play

Throughout the school we are constantly reviewing our curriculum to make sure that it meets the needs of our learners. In particular, to make sure that it meets the needs of our learners within the local context of Highland.

Our rapidly expanding Skills for Work Programme is a great example of seeing this happen in practice. Students have an opportunity to work towards certification in a variety of courses including bricklaying, plumbing and joinery skills. Mr McGougan and his team have also been working hard to develop our courses in Engineering that we will introduce in 2012/2013.

Quality Learning Produces Quality Work

Visitors to the school may be mistaken for thinking that they have walked into an Ikea Showroom (although our work is obviously better quality!). Over the last 12 months we have had a real push on improving the output and overall quality of student practical projects and this was certainly reflected in the summer's SQA exam results. From tool boxes, to mug holders, to tables, to bedside cabinets, to guitars, to pool cue cases, our pupils have designed and built them all. We are always proud to celebrate their achievements both within and outwith of the school.

Cross Curricular Focus

On a Tuesday we run a flexible timetable. This is a great opportunity for our students to make links across subject areas and also for our staff to work with other staff in different parts of the school. Technical are fully involved in this programme from researching the buildings and construction of Grantown (in the past and present), to outdoor learning trips to discover and help students understand about the advantages and disadvantages of renewable energy and the popular 'buggy' challenge – linked to the Physics Department.

Outdoor Learning at GGS

As part of our outdoor learning programme and supporting our Broad General Education in S1 – S3 young people at GGS get to experience a wide variety of Outdoor Activities as part of their formal learning. This includes Canoeing, Skiing, Mountain Biking and Bushcraft Activities.

Before the October Break you could regularly find groups of our pupils out on the River Spey on a Thursday where they work alongside qualified Grantown Grammar School Staff to brush up their Open Canoe Skills. As well as being great fun and a really interesting way to explore the river, Open Canoeing offers a great opportunity to develop transferable skills such as communication, collaboration and problem solving.

A number of pupils will go on to develop their skills further as they move up the school as we offer opportunities to complete the Duke of Edinburgh Expedition at Silver and Gold level by Open Canoe.

In the past this has seen pupil-led expeditions complete full Spey descents and also trips on some of Scotland's other big rivers such as the River Tay.

Teacher Feature

(Get to know the staff)

Name: Andy Nias

Role: Teacher of Technical

Subject(s): Craft and Design, Graphic Communication, Product Design & Skills for Work

Time at GGS: Since August 2011

Height: 6' 1"

Hobbies and interests: Climbing, Walking, Lego, Tighrope Walking and Judging Cake Baking Competitions

Favourite Book: Screwfix Catalogue

Favourite Film: Bob the Builder: the Movie

Website checked every day: eBay

Special Powers: Able to walk through walls (but only the ones he has built!)

Secret Past: Once represented the UK in an International competition (but can you guess which one?)

(Note – usually a couple of wee white lies go in this section to make it more interesting!)

News

#1 – S2 Song competition a great success and clips now available on YouTube

#2 – Well done to the group of students who completed their Community Sports Leaders Award over the half term holidays (and the group that also completed their lifeguard qualification!)

#3 – We recently won the Secondary Category of the Cairngorm National Park Outdoor Learning Competition. The prize included a lovely framed certificate and a Cairngorm National Park Flag – now we just need a flag pole (a possible challenge for the Technical Department!).

#4 – All of our S5 and S6 pupils took part in the 'Driving Ambition' programme this week.

#5 – Congratulations to Mr McCrow (our PT of Art and Design) – who recently got married!

Dates for your Diary (Oct/Nov)

1 November - Halloween Disco

6 November - S2 Parents' Evening

12 November - School Photographs

21 November - S5/S6 Parents' Evening

11 December – Junior Christmas Disco

12 December – Christmas Concert

18-20 December – School Show

Things to explore...

As you know the curriculum in Scotland is changing (it has been for the last two years). Some of these web links will help keep you up-to-date with the latest changes.

- www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone - ParentZone provides essential information and sources of support for parents and families
- <http://goo.gl/Lcr3M> - What is Curriculum for Excellence? From Education Scotland.
- <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34714.html> - All about Scotland's new National Qualifications (including the ones that will replace Standard Grade) from the Scottish Qualifications Authority.
- <http://engageforeducation.org> – have your say about Scottish Education on this website provided by the Scottish Government.

PRESENT PUPILS'S DITTIES

Pupil	Highlights of School Year	Favourite Subjects	Future Career
Gregor MacGillivray	Learning to drive	Graphic Communications and PE	Go where the wind takes me!
Fiona McIntosh	Being in a learning environment Problem solving	Art & Design – I enjoy drawing and art history	Degree in Nursing (adult and child)
Keryne McLeod	Learning new skills and seeing my friends	Art & Design, English and Graphic Communications – because of the problem solving, creativity and design	Uni, London, America – hope to make my own TV series or comic book
Alex Miles	Running and organising the discos	Geography	Electrical engineering
Duncan Miller	Playing rugby, taking part in the school show – Funky Toon	PE, Geography, English	Farm management
Scott Rose	Good teachers this year!	Graphics, Maths	
Marisa Ruettimann	School shows! The freedom given to seniors to organise things in school	My distance learning courses and Community Involvement - helping other pupils in school	College and Uni!
Calum Smith	The school show – Funky Toon!	Music and Cake Friday!	Agricultural Engineering
Luke Sermanni	Common room, blasting out tunes, rugby trips and the Paris trip	Modern Studies, PE, Construction and Music	College/Uni in Glasgow then either offshore or join the army

The following pages are Dr Jimmy Allan's research into the history of Dulnain Bridge.

Recollections of Dulnain Bridge in the early 1920's

These recollections of the village of Dulnain-Bridge in the early 1920's are those of, at that time, a very young schoolboy.

First however, it will be of interest to discuss the origin of the village back in the early 18th century. This can be set out under two headings.

1) The bridge over the river seems to have been on the main military route between Fort George and the south. Originally built of wood in 1791, it was destroyed in the Moray floods of 1829. It was rebuilt in stone in 1830 by Joseph Mitchell who also built the Caledonian canal. I print below an accurate copy of a very old document - written exactly 200 years ago.

“This certifies that James Gow or Smith, at Bridge-End of Dulnan on the bounds of Ballintome, resides by the public or military roadside that leads from Fort George south to Dulnan Bridge through Drumochter to Stirling - that he keeps a decent, regular, victualing house, useful for accomodating all foot travellers as well as military, so that according to act of parliament, he is entitled to a license for the retailing of ale, beer and other excisable liquors free of duty for the dues of the Clerk of the Peace of the Counties.

*Given at Ballintome the 4th day of November 1797
James Grant, Justice of the Peace”*

I refer later to an original document in which it is stated that a James Smith - very likely the innkeeper referred to above - is granted a feu, at the Skye of Curr, of three acres for which he paid seven shillings and sixpence a year.

2) In removing heather, the soil for cultivation was found to be too acid and lime was required. In Strathspey, the most fruitful deposits were found on the hilly ground between Upper Finlarig and Easter Laggan, and the site of excavations can still be seen there. A few yards from the village, up the Finlarig road, stands a large lime kiln, now sealed off, where the lime was prepared for use. It is today, a splendid example of a the building skills of those involved. It dates from 1787.

I was one of a group of young children (3 Russells, 4 Ritchies, 4 Maclennans and 4 Allans) who walked from Ballintomb to the village school in the very early 1920's. The building of the war memorial caused a deviation in our path. There were no buildings on that side of the road until 1950. Also, there were no buildings eastward of the church, apart from the Ross sawmill and the rifle hut. The church was in use only in the summer months - in the autumn and winter the congregation met in the much smaller church near the school. A paragraph on the history of these churches appears later.

The village hall, built in 1896, has remained unaltered externally. It is remembered principally, by the children of that time as the meeting place of the Scouts and Guides - and, of course, by the riotous assembly for the annual Christmas party and the arrival of Santa Claus, he, for year after year, having a marked resemblance to Hugh Fraser.

Now we come to quite a few changes. Macgregor was an old man when I first knew him. His shop was where Mrs Barclay now watches T.V.. At one time it had been the post office. Sadly the poor man was, latterly, full of worries - an invalid wife, Jimmy an imbecile son - and the

business almost non-existent. We boys must have been a sore trial, frequently going to his shop to try to persuade him to let us have cigarette cards out of packets he almost certainly did not have. Jimmy was harmless, but frightening to those that did not know him - constantly shouting loudly or hooting like an owl. They lived in a very small dwelling behind the shop, the main house, now Mrs Barclays - being let to summer visitors. My maternal grandparents stayed there for a few weeks at about this time and I remember standing at their door to see the King (George V) and Queen pass on their way to visit the Mackintosh at Moy Hall. This was in 1921. Another guest of the Mackintosh at the same time was the Prime Minister, Lloyd George. A faint memory is of Mrs Macgregor's death and my mother saying the poor lady could not be buried because of the extremely hard frost causing problems for the grave digger.

The next building - across the Finlarig road - is the handsome house which I still refer to as "Dr Hill's House" - though I never had any knowledge of Dr Hill. At the west end of his house is the small cottage in which Danny Calder lived. He was a cobbler and seemed to be kept busy making and repairing boots. His place of work was down the very narrow lane that still runs between his cottage and the Ross joiner's shop. At the end of the lane could be seen Danny, sitting cobbling and gossiping. A delightful old man.

The east end of the present Ross complex was the joiner and carpenter set-up of "Old Chas". This was the grandfather of Bobby Ross - the latter still happily with us. He was very small with white hair and a white beard. He had his own saw-mill east of the church. I remember when the Rev. Neville Dundas's house was built - the woodwork and electricity being done by the Ross firm, and the architecture and masonry being the responsibility of the brothers Alex and Donald Mackintosh. This house is now owned by Donnaid and Margaret Mackenzie to whom I am greatly indebted for their help in preparing this article, particularly the document, dated 1797, referred to earlier, and a further document "sett of lands of Skye of Curr in April 1796" which will be referred to later. "Old Chas" died in 1924. He lost three sons in the 1914-1918 war. His son Jock's motor mechanic business was beginning to flourish as more and more people were taking the plunge and buying a car. At this time his premises were quite small - stretching only to where there was a wide passage between him and the blacksmith. This opening led up a few yards to the blacksmith's very attractive cottage - now sadly "Gone with the wind". Macdonald and his son had a flourishing business - mainly the shoeing of farm horses - and a visit to the door by we schoolboys to watch the sparks flying, was a never failing delight. The smiddy was quite large, occupying where we now find the present Ross shop and petrol pumps.

Now we come to the centre point of the village - the shop. With Macgregor's business in terminal decline, and the death of Duncan Menzies who owned the shop across the bridge - I remember we pupils being let out of school to watch his funeral - no less than two black horses to pull the hearse! (he was a large very stout man). This shop, with the post office, flourished, no supermarkets or large vans in these days! The Calders were a delightful couple and descendants of their large family still, happily live in the district. In 1936 there was the terribly sad drowning of a son, Jim, in the Dulnain River almost opposite his home - Rose Cottage. At this spot in the centre of the river, there is a very large boulder on top of which, in my time, there was cemented a large tin fish. Is it still there? Bushes now obscure this stone from the road.

With the advent of the telephone I remember the discussion in my family of whether to get one. This was in 1922. I think the G.P.O. required a minimum of ten subscribers in the district before giving the go-ahead. The Calders installed and worked the telephone exchange - or, rather their youngest son Andrew did. It would not, for some years, have kept him very busy. The large house adjoining the shop - owned by the Calders - was let for a month one summer to

my maternal grandparents. My grandmother was a complete invalid and my sister, Moira, was christened in this house, in Grandmother's bedroom - the ground floor room to the left of the front door. Later, for many years, this house served as the manse.

At this point I digress to explain the reason why the village had two churches. In 1846 the unfortunate disruption in the Church of Scotland - caused mainly by the insistence of many a laird appointing a minister of his choice rather than the choice of the congregation - meant that, at Dulnain, part of the congregation worshipped - first in a house at Mid Curr - until, in 1912, the small church was built near the school. Eventually, sanity prevailed and the two congregations joined in 1926 - three years before the national re-union of the two factions of the Church of Scotland. From then until 1960, we had our own minister. Many winter months I attended Sunday School and then the church service in that small building near the school.

The school was built in 1890, previously children being taught in a house at the lower end of the Skye of Curr road. In July 1960 the doors closed for the last time, all children being transported to Grantown. I have very happy memories of this school in the 1920's under the two teachers Mr Stewart and Miss Cameron, and many still regard the closure as a retrograde step. Subsequent masters who left their mark were Mr Mackinnon and Mr Beaton.

I have referred to a document - "Factor James Grant's abstract history of the feus around Grantown" written in 1807, and including the following note -

"Skye of Curr"

"Sett of lands in April 1796"

"Thomas Clark for 3 acres of the new ground on the Skye of Curr, for which he pays seven shillings and sixpence yearly"

"William Mackenzie for 3 acres of said ground as the same terms as above"

"Also John Smith and James Smith, each for 3 acres on the same terms as above"

In our more affluent society, peat is no longer required in place of coal or firewood, yet I have a clear recollection of my mother with a barrow, carting peats to a horse-drawn lorry. This was about 1922 on a moor about a mile up the steep lane that runs alongside "Ach-na-Bhealaidh", and parallel to the river.

Hopefully I will be excused for adding some sporting notes. Between the Ross and the Calder buildings there is a narrow steep path leading up to the Finlarig road. When there was packed frozen snow this track made an excellent toboggan run, starting at the Finlarig road. We were forcibly stopped at the shop unless the road was clear. It usually was, when we were signalled to continue down to the bridge! Under the bridge there was, still is, a wonderful swimming pool.

But the highlight was the boys' football team - the "Dulnain Dandies" - more than a match for any other boys' team in the strath. In my last year at Grantown school - in the school team I had no less than five other Dulnain boys as team mates - John and Bobby Ross, Donnie Fraser, and the sons of Alex and Donald Mackintosh both called Evan. Then we had our annual sports day - all children and adults meeting at the school and marching to the field at Mid Curr - entering where the house "Bydand" now stands - marching behind "Bandy" Campbell in full Highland regalia, playing the bagpipes - no problem for him, an ex-pipe major in the Seaforth Highlanders.

Dulnain Bridge: A short walk round the outlying district

Following a recent talk on the village, with reference to its origin, and memories of the 1920s, it is, hopefully, of interest to take a short walk round its neighbourhood. We start from the village by walking along the road towards Grantown. After about half a mile we see on the left a large description board of the Development of the Roches Moutonnées. Ten thousand years ago the area around Dulnain Bridge was overlain by a vast sheet of glacier ice thought to be as much as 700m thick, which consistently ground down the underlying bedrock as the ice moved from south west to north east. Further back, on a wooden platform, is a display board identifying the various mountain tops - those readily seen using the telescope provided.

Just before reaching the road to Easter Laggan, and directly in line with the road to Ballintomb, a bubbling spring appears about 150 yards north. This supplies all the drinking water to Ballintomb. Slightly further up, and between this point and the Easter Laggan road, it was possible a few decades ago to find remains of cottages - possibly of those who worked in the late 18th century at lime excavations on the ridge towards Upper Finlarig, where evidence of these workings can still be seen. Sadly this wood, to the left of the road to Easter Laggan, is now so thick and so dense with bushes and undergrowth as to be quite impenetrable. Each spring, a popular walk is a visit to the Primrose Wood, lying a few yards east of Wester Laggan farm buildings. Is that yellow 'carpet' still so attractive?

In the 1925 - 1935 decade, Easter Laggan House was occupied by K. G. McLeod - "The greatest natural games player of all time."¹ He first played rugby for Scotland when aged 17, and in his three years at Cambridge he played rugby and cricket each year against Oxford and also each year won the 100yds race. For many years he was the Scottish long jump record holder.²

There is a splendid panoramic view from Easter Laggan. From the Cromdale hills in the east, we see, quite clearly, Bynack More, Cairn Gorm, Meall a' Bhuachaille, Ben Macdui, Cairn Toul, Braeriach, down to Glenfeshie.

We cannot leave Easter Laggan without the rather sad remembrance of the task which befell the Ballintomb farmer's younger son, who was in poor health for all of his life. During the months following Dunkirk (June 1940), when an invasion by the Germans was thought to be imminent, he was required to spend all night, five nights a week, at the top of the hill between Easter Laggan and Glenbeg, with his shotgun, to help repel the German paratroops should they land there! It is a ludicrous thought now, but at the time the invasion dread was very real.

We now go to Ballintomb - eastwards to the hillock due south of the boundary fence between the farm and Lower Gaich. The small ravine separating the hillock from the remains of the wood is man made - the soil was required to help to create the foundation of the railway line when it was built. The wood - extending to Lower Gaich - was known as the "Crow Wood" - home of hundreds of crows. There is now no wood and so, much to the relief of the farmers, no crows. On the hillock there is a 'standing stone' or 'Pictish stone' which can be seen quite clearly from the road. There is a smaller stone lying nearby, and a third in the wood. I quote

"In the absence of public buildings, the court of the sheriff was usually held at some familiar landmark, and such megalithic remains as 'standing stones' provided the meeting place for the Royal and Baronial Courts. These well defined spots, with recognisable antiquity would enhance the dignity of the proceedings with ancient feeling of respect and awe."³

In support of this there is mention of the Ballintomb 'Hanging Tree' - also used for the lesser punishment of nailing a miscreant's ear to the tree.⁴

These stones at Ballintomb are very similar to the stones at Callanish in Lewis - the remaining thirteen stones there forming a circle thirty-seven feet in diameter. I quote Dr I F Grant –

“The Scots' veneration for the sites of 'standing stones' lasted far into the middle ages. Their Pictish origin was prior to the Norse invasions in the middle of the first century AD”⁵

At the extreme east end of the wood - close to Lower Gaich farm there is a large depression. This was the site of the cattle market until, in 1765, the laird, Sir Ludovic Grant - work carried on by “The Good Sir James” (1773 - 1811) - began the planning and building of Grantown, and, subsequently the market moved there.⁶

It may be of interest to a younger generation who has no knowledge of road surfaces other than those so beautifully smooth of today, that in the decade after the First War the road from Dulnain to Grantown required non-stop attention from two men, Mackenzie and Grant, to fill in the frequently occurring pot-holes with molten tar, and the cutting back of the road-side gorse. A school mate from Ballintomb had an unfortunate accident when cycling to school. His front wheel went into a deep pothole and he went head first into a large whin bush.

Directly across the Spey from the 'standing stones' is a small croft “Boat of Balliefurth” so called because, until about 1920, there was a boat there for hire. The writer has a faint memory of his father whistling for the old boatman to ferry them across and back. The old man died shortly afterwards and that was the end of the ferry. A delightful walk down-river from here for about a mile and we reach the peaceful charm of Inverallan cemetery - burial ground for our district for over a hundred years.

At Ballintomb farm, two large rectangular stones - 5' x 3' with distinct Pictish markings were found. One - the “Ballintomb Stone” is in the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. The other can now be seen a few yards from the front door of Lower Finlarig House.

We now return to the village and take the road to Finlarig. We pass the beautifully built lime-kiln constructed in 1787 to prepare lime for use on farmland. The large house there was built in the 1920's for the Rev Neville Dundas. The myth of the Loch Ness monster is largely, I am convinced, due to him. With vague rumours of such an animal, there came a day when all the national newspapers were full of a statement by him, to the effect that, on motoring along the loch side one dark night, he had seen in the car lights an animal “the size of a cow” which had slithered across the road and down towards the loch. This statement, from a minister of the Church of Scotland, was enough to convince most people of the monster's existence. No-one, apparently, made enquiries as to the amount of alcoholic refreshment which, perhaps, was responsible.

At the extreme end of the road is the croft of Balnouch. Father MacIannan became tenant in 1925 and, remarkably, his three children, all unmarried, (a fourth died in childhood), having grown up at Balnouch, all continued to live there for the rest of their long lives. The croft buildings have now been abandoned and are in ruins but the farmhouse has now - 1998 - been beautifully restored. The very steep climb up to the croft has the reward of yet another stunning panoramic view of the Cairngorms.

Just down the hill from Balnouch is Muckerach Castle. A total wreck for many decades, it has recently been completely restored to become habitable again. In 1570⁷ the Clan Grant chief gave the moor of Muckerach to his second son Patrick, on which to build a tower. Patrick's

mother, Lady Margaret Stewart, was a cousin of Mary, Queen of Scots. Shaw of Rothiemurchus had been outlawed by the queen because of repeated acts of treachery, and, in 1580 their lands were given to Patrick “gin he could win it.” This he did, and his descendants are still there.⁸ Patrick’s father died in 1585. His memorial stone was later found in the vault at Duthil and was taken to Castle Grant.⁹

A short distance from the castle is Muckerach Lodge - now a hotel but built as a shooting lodge. For two decades after the 1914 to 1918 war it was occupied annually in the grouse-shooting months by A.D. Grant. He was the third son of the farmer at Garvault near Advie. With no prospects and little education he went to the Argentine as a poor man and returned as a very wealthy one. During the grouse shooting at Muckerach each year he was a tremendous boon to the young men and boys of the village who were employed at the arduous task of ‘beating’. Returning to the village we cross the bridge - built primarily for Hanoverian troops on their route from Fort George to Stirling in the troublesome post-Culloden era.

A walk along the Curr road brings us to the sports field of the years before 1950. Permission to use the field was always readily given by Mrs Smith of Mid-Curr - a delightful old lady. A memory of her is that she had a tame baby roe deer that ran in and out of her small cottage, keeping company with dogs, cats, lambs and hens.

Finally we walk as far as Auchencraig - just prior to Auchendean - to be reminded of the last sending round the district of the “Fiery Cross”. This was when a Calder grand daughter aged about six went missing. With darkness rapidly approaching, word went round for parties to search the woods and the banks of the two rivers. She was found the following morning having fallen asleep in the very thick wood between her home and Skye of Curr. She is alive today - in her mid eighties, fit and well.

J.R.A. 1998

¹ R H Bruce Lockhart “My Scottish Home” p.307

² R H Bruce Lockhart “My Scottish Home” p.308

³ Dr I F Grant “Periods in Highland History” p. 41

⁴ Forsyth “In the Shadow of Cairngorm”

⁵ Dr I F Grant “Highland Folk Ways” p.6

⁶ Lord Strathspey “A History of Clan Grant” p.37

⁷ Elizabeth Grant “Memoirs of a Highland Lady” p184
(not 1556 as stated but 1570)

⁸ Elizabeth Grant “Memoirs of a Highland Lady” p185

⁹ Lord Strathspey “A History of Clan Grant” p.1