

Jamie - A Story About Your Granddad

I'm starting to write this on the 18th of March 2001, the reason for writing this is quite simple: I grew up not knowing a thing about my Granddads, both died before I was born, so I thought it important that I tell you something about me. My Granddad on my Dad's side, was James (Peem) Millar, a docker, died 1944. My Granddad on my Mum's side was Thomas Mitchell, a Dundee policeman for 30 years, died 1911.

I was born on the 20th May 1940 in a house in Victoria road, Dundee, if you could call it a house. It was only one room and I lived there with my two brothers, James O'Rourke, who was born in 1928, and Andrew who was born 1936 who recently passed away with covid, October 2021, and my Mum and Dad. Can you imagine five people living in one room the toilet was outside?

The stairs leading up to the house (now regarded as a flat) were wooden; I hate to think what would have happened in the event of a fire. My earliest memories are of big barrage balloons down at the docks, as our house was on the top we had a great view over the river. You have to remember, this was at the start of the Second World War and were a protection against airplanes.

Let me start my story by telling you about my Dad, your Great Granddad, he was born in Dundee 5th May 1911 and named Andrew but was always called Andy he died 1st February 1990 (in the army he was known as Dusty). He was in the Black Watch before and during the War, and seen a lot of action in Europe, but he refused to ever speak about it to anyone. I remember asking him on numerous occasions what he done in the war did he ever kill any Germans, and I got the same answer every time he would say the only “angry” German he ever seen was the German boxer Max Schmelling when he was fighting Joe Louis for the Heavyweight Championship of the World.

Unknown to my brothers and me he was married before to a Jesse Gibson Patterson; they had a Daughter Catherine Thornton Millar who died at 14 months old. My sister, your mum's aunt, your great aunt, I would have loved to have had a sister. I have tried without success to locate where she was buried. A strange coincidence they were divorced on the 5th November 1944 and both married again in the same month. I can only assume this was allowed because both men were going to return to active service.

He did however spend six months guarding the Tay Bridge, he left one day in a big parade from Bell Street to march to the Tay Bridge Train Station, my Mum was crying because it looked like he was off to fight in the War and she might never see him again, frightened he might be Killed. I can't remember but my Mum told us about the band playing a tune called “When I Grow Too Old Too Dream” and the troops marching, and the women and children following alongside. So that was him away to fight in the war, but that night he was back home for his tea, him being a Corporal or a Sergeant at the time saw him put off the train on the bridge in charge of a detail and he spent the next Six Months in guarding the Tay Rail Bridge.(The Road Bridge was built in the early sixties). He was forever being demoted for fighting, being drunk or going missing

I must tell you how I got my name Joseph, it's important to tell you just now, that my Mum was a late child and didn't grow up alongside her sisters and brothers, but grew up with her brothers and sisters children, this resulted in us, her children, calling our cousins Auntie and Uncle. So my cousin who I always called Auntie Nellie married an Italian called Joseph Tiseo so it turned out that Joe was on leave when I was born.

I was born in the house as opposed to the Hospital, Joe had to sit on the stairs during the birth. And he had run for the Doctor (my Dad would have been away abroad at the time) he also refused to leave until he had made sure that my Mum and me were okay. Joe was a Piper in the Black Watch and was obviously doing his bit for his Parents adopted country, but while he was in the army fighting abroad, his Mum and Dad were interred as Italian Nationals. We have to remember that Italy under the Dictator Mussolini had become allies with the Germans and we were at war with Italy.

About this time the Germans started to bomb Dundee. There was the Boatyard and of course the Tay Bridge Also the Jute Mills would have been a great target. The Jute Mills were one of the reasons that Dundee stayed relatively safe because apparently there was constant smog over the City from the many chimneys. Anyhow a couple of bombs dropped and my Mum thought we would be safer living at her sister Aunty Bridget's cottage on a farm at Plebo Mains outside Cupar in Fife, the first night we were there a German Bomber was trying to find the Bridge, couldn't, and dropped his bombs in Fife, yes you guessed it, right on the Farm we were staying on, all the fields were burning around the house, we were back in Dundee the next morning, so I can always say I was involved in the War and had a narrow escape.

About 1944 Andy and me had to go into a home. My Mum was very ill and in Hospital with Pneumonia, Dad was away to the war. They were not married so mum would not be getting any money from him, so I don't suppose there was a lot of choice but for us to go into care for a while. The home was called Cromarty House and is still standing on the main Dundee to St. Andrews road. I can't remember how long we were there but it seemed to be forever, one of the things I hated which is quite funny now I suppose was the underpants they gave you were a lot longer than the short trousers, with the result that no matter how hard you tried your underpants were always on show, as young as I was I can remember being embarrassed every time we went for a walk. Who was there to see me we were in the middle of the country.

Another memory from 1945, that has come back to me about Victoria Road is a big parade from the middle of the town to celebrate the end of the War and it passed our house, we had a grandstand view of all the soldiers Tanks and big Guns, as young as I was I can still feel the happiness and relief that was generated from the adults at that time.

One of the things you looked forward to was the Carnival, between 1945 and 1950,. It was held on the Gussie Park in Tannadice Street and is now owned by Dundee United. Money was tight, things were tight so it was a great treat, so Dad would take Andy and me, and he would head straight for the Boxing Booth. What happened then was the Boxers came out of the tent, and the man running the show then tried to get men to challenge each boxer for the equivalent of about 50p, Ten Shillings in those days quite a lot of money. Anyhow up would go my Dads hands to catch the gloves, the rules were if you

survived three rounds you got your Ten Shillings, you got nothing if you didn't go the distance. I cant count how many times I saw my Dad do this and he won his money every time. He was a brave, hard man.

For these boxers, this was their full time job. They were very fit, so the guys that caught the gloves were up against it. I can remember two occasions when he knocked out his opponents. So after that was finished we were off to enjoy the shows and rides. We got on anything we liked, and at the end of the night we would all get chips, and he would take home chips and cigarettes to my Mum.

After the War he opened a shop in Princes Street repairing radios (known at that time as wireless) he was a few years at that then decided to go into the Jute Mills to earn more money, but hated that and finished his working life in the licensed trade as a Bar Manager.



In the latter part of his life he was, I suppose, an alcoholic, he had been a heavy drinker since the end of the war. It is just in the last few years that soldiers have been getting counseling, this was unheard of in the army at that time. You were expected to do your duty and to suggest fighting in a war could effect you in any way, was taken as cowardice, so it is little wonder people turned to drink as a way of forgetting what they had seen or done.

He lived until his 79th year and just died weeks before his 80th birthday in Roxburgh House and not as was expected in Halleys Bar. One of his sayings I remember when I was young was when it was cold he'd say" cauld blaws the breezes through the treeses by Jeeses if I dinna get a hurl ell wak"

Now on to my mum, your Great Granny, she was born in Dundee 22nd April 1907 her name was Thomasina Mitchell O'Rourke and she died 7th February 1979. She was one of ten children, nine of whom were born to Mr O'Rourke. Her father was a Mr Mitchell and her mother's maiden name was Benison.

My mum and dad were married 8th November1944. To me that didn't matter, what mattered most was they loved me and treated me very well. My mum didn't work in the early part of my life I was lucky she was always there for me. That lasted until I went to school. Then about 1951, my dad left home and disappeared off to London. It was then, my mum had to go out to work. The jobs she had to take were cleaning or Cafe work washing dishes; remember this was before Dishwashers, hard work in those days.

She was a very hard worker, I remember her having three jobs at one time, she started in a work's canteen down at the docks early in the morning then went to Wilson's Restaurant from about 11am till 3pm then back down to the docks canteen to clean up for starting the next morning and still managed to keep her house immaculately clean. She was extremely house proud, close to the point of being over the top.

Your mum and my mum had a bit of a stormy relationship, brought about by her being very unfair to your mum on several occasions.

James, my oldest brother, had three children Jimmy, Dennis and Sheena. Mum thought that she should give more to his children because your granny and I both worked. In theory I suppose that works well, but what she did not consider was your mum was young and all she saw was Sheena getting far better gifts than her.

So she was not your mum's favourite person but she loved all her grandchildren just the same. Now that I'm older I now know that James was treated better or differently than us because he had been born out of wedlock i.e. different father before she met and married your great grandad. I am not trying to excuse her actions merely trying to explain her actions, but as I said she was a great mum to me and I still miss her very much.

She was everybody's favourite aunt, as soon as any of her nephews or nieces got into the slightest bother it was your great granny they ran to. I know that she would have loved you every bit as much as I do. Her life was up and down like a yoyo but the only time I heard her complaining was when she didn't have enough money to get her through the week. It must have been hard on her trying to feed two grown boys on the pittance she earned or got from my father; James by this time was in the RAF. It was not unusual for him to drink or gamble most of his wages before he got home on a Friday night. So on these occasions she had to go to her sisters and borrow money, something I know she hated doing, but she always paid them back in more ways than one: she would pay the money back then clean their houses from top to bottom. She was very proud and hated asking for help but had to swallow her pride on several occasions to feed and clothe us.

As I have said before we lived in a one-room house in Victoria road, then we moved to Catherine Street into two rooms (luxury), the toilet was outside and we shared it with another family; this was from about 1945 to 1950. We were in two rooms and our house was in the close, mum had a room to keep as (what she termed her good room) it was also our bedroom and was kept immaculate.

I've just been handed a poster as a prompt to help me remember things as I go along and one of the things that are mentioned is "Rovies" this was a type of slipper made in the jute mills and I can remember well now, wearing these in Catherine Street, my Dad would bring them home for me and Andy, they were very comfortable, and the ones we had went up past your ankles. If you ever get the chance to feel a piece of jute you will notice there's a heat generated from the Material, and it was very Combustible causing a lot of fires in the Jute Mills, so it was the ideal material for 'cosy slippers'.

I was five years old when we moved into Catherine Street, my best pal at that time was Bruce Abbot. Bruce and I won the Second World War nearly every day and fought red

Indians. We saw the film *The Charge Of The Light Brigade* on the Broadway Cinema in Arhurstone Terrace, so Catherine Street was turned into the Crimea and rang to the sound of imaginary cannon fire, horses galloping, soldiers screaming as we were blown off our horses; this was in the days when you had to entertain yourself, there were no videos or computers, cowboy guns and holsters were the toys of the day.

You couldn't re-enact these films without a girl to play the part of the heroine so we had Ann Bowman, she was my first girlfriend, what I remember is we just seemed to hit it off right away. So that was me, five years old and involved with women. I met her and her Mum again through Granny Mags and Mrs Bowman took great delight in telling me about the times I used to go to her door looking for Ann and I said the same thing every time "is bonnie Ann coming oot". It turns out that Granny Mags Dad had a sister that married Mrs Bowman's brother.

We went to the cinema every chance we got, at that time there seemed to be Cinemas everywhere. The Royal and The Broadway were in Arhurstone Terrace, The Ritz was in Morgan Street the Royalty was in Baffin Street, these were only minutes away from Catherine Street, and in these days you got to see two films: a B film then the Big Picture. The other good thing about the cinemas in those days was the programme changed on a Wednesday, so you could see two films on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, then another two films Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The above mentioned cinemas were all showing different films, so you could if you could afford it, see a different film every night. Then you went along to the Kings, which became the Gaumont and is now empty, or the Broadway on Saturday morning to the children's club where you seen films and joined in with singalongs i.e. the words appeared on the screen and we all sang at the top of our voices, I suppose it was an early form of Karaoke. Although it may sound strange to you, this was the entertainment of the day, and we couldn't wait for Saturday.

At about seven or eight years old, I contracted two illnesses: measles and chickenpox. Mum and Dad could not stay off work, so, I was left in bed on my own in the house. I do remember both of these illnesses were in the winter time. At the time the lighting in the house was gas mantles and we, as kids, were well warned not to touch the gas. The result of this was darkness would fall about 4 o' clock which left me in the dark. For a seven or eight year old can you imagine how terrifying this was.

When I was young I was a member of Ogilvie Church in Dura Street it was roughly 500 yards from where we lived in Catherine St. so every Sunday morning we were packed off to Sunday school. I would not consider myself as a church person but do consider myself a Christian, I have always believed in God and have had tolerance towards everybody else's God. I have never cared what colour, or religion a man is, and hope you can follow a similar path. I have found in this world, that intolerance to other people's beliefs has caused more trouble and wars, than any other singular thing. When you follow your religion don't be blinkered. I've always said we will all get a big shock, if, when we get up to heaven, were met by **Manitou** the Native American God.

Anyhow what I'm leading into is boy's organisations, with going to Ogilvie Church it followed on that we joined either the Cubs then the Scouts or the Life Boys then the Boys Brigade. I don't know why but I joined the Life Boys. Our meeting place was a church hall in Peep O' Day Lane off Broughty Ferry Road. (I was later to play a lot of competition darts in that same hall when it was turned into a Social Club) One thing the Life Boys taught me was to fit in, and become a team player, and I enjoyed the marching, and the games, it was good fun and allowed you to meet other boys.

Circa 1951, instead of doing the normal thing I joined the Army Cadets and stayed there for a couple of years. We used to leave on Friday night and be driven down to Barry Buddon Army Camp outside Carnoustie we spent the weekend learning about camouflage and weapons training.

I enjoyed the drill and the arms training, and especially the camps. Our base was Strathmore Avenue and is still being used for the same thing today.

Part of the programme was on the Firing Range we weren't allowed live ammunition but it was great fun firing blanks. We had mock battles during the day and exercises at night, sometimes we would join Regular soldiers or the Territorial Army for manoeuvres it was absolutely fantastic

Holidays, what was a holiday? I'll tell you it was a few weeks at the berries over in Cupar, Fife around 1953, I won't forget it in a hurry. We lived in wooden huts, the toilets were dry, we slept on straw mattresses, and there was always a wasp's nest at the well. What a ball we used to have. I would never ever make a berry picker so I spent all my time trying to hide from my Dad and making Bows and Arrows.

Then there was one time at the berries in Cupar, Fife when I got a hammering from my Uncle Terry, but was in fact my cousin. I called him uncle because my mum was a very late child and she was brought up with all her nieces and nephews. "Uncle" Terry's son, Sonny, was giving everybody a hard time; he was the same age as me, about ten. Anyhow, we had all been sent to bed and Sonny kept crying and shouting (can't remember what about) but Uncle Terry came in and told him to shut up or he would get a hammering.

The silence lasted for about 20 minutes then Sonny started up again, through came his Dad, Uncle Terry, he grabbed me by the hair pulled me out of my bed onto the floor and proceeded to give me the hammering thinking I was Sonny. I was screaming my head off, shouting, "It's me, Joe! I'm no Sonny!" Eventually he stopped, my Mum and Dad went ballistic. That was the second time I had got a belting from Uncle Terry (hardly the same as Tummell, eh?).

The other time I was at my mum's sister, Auntie Bridget's, circa 1948, I was trying to chop wood with an axe, something an 8 year old should not be trying. Anyhow, I lifted the Axe above my head and it was far too heavy for me and when I got it up in the air instead of coming down and hitting the wood in front of me it dropped behind me and hit Sonny on the head, it split his forehead and the blood was pouring from him. The upshot

of this was Uncle Terry came running out of the house and took one look at Sonny and battered me.

The first holiday I ever had in my life was to my cousins, the Wintons, in Crewe, Cheshire, I was with your Mum and Granny Pat so I must have been about 24 years of age.

I'm now going to write about some of the things that went on when I was a boy, the things I got up to, and incidents that were all part of growing up. When we were in Catherine Street James my oldest brother must have been 17 yrs old when we moved there in 1945. He worked in a Pub called Oddfellows it was situated at the bottom of William Street right on the corner, it was funny but Granny Mags Mum and Dad got a house right on the same spot, and I'll mention another coincidence concerning them, when they moved from Broughty ferry Road they got a house in Whitfield then they had to move to the aforementioned house at the bottom of William Street. Your Granny Pat moved into their house in Whitfield.

Anyhow to get back to James he had pals who were message boys with Butchers, Bakers, and Grocers, and they used to go to my Mums house for a cup of tea when they were out delivering, and if she wasn't in it was a case of just open the window, climb in, and make themselves a cup of tea (nobody had coffee in those days) so it was not unusual for my Mum to come home to a parcel or two of food left in payment for the cup of tea. Then one day she came home and found the usual parcel of food sitting on the table, and also noticed that the big pile of dishes she had left to be washed when she returned, were missing, she said to herself 'what braw laddies they are they've even done the dishes' later on when it came time to set the table for the tea she couldn't find any dishes or cutlery and started to think that the house had been broken into and somebody had stole all her dishes. But then she had a thought, in order to get in the window, George Cairns would have to lift the dishes off the bunker and put them on the ground, so she went around the back and sure enough there was all her dirty dishes sitting under the window.

Now how do I describe a 'bunker' well the windows were normally set in an alcove and that's where your sink was, and built into this area was storage for coal called a bunker, the top of the bunker ran parallel with the top of the sink and had a door in the top for access to the coal, and doubled as a draining board.

James worked in the Bar trade until 1946 when he was called up for National Service, this was compulsory at the time and you had to serve approx. 2 years. He was in the Royal Air Force as was my other brother Andy when he was called up (called up, this was the general way National Service was described in those days) this leads me on to another story.

Before James went in to the RAF, he would come home at night, the pubs closed at 21:30 at this time, then would go to Fortes Chip Shop in Dura St. for his supper and if I was still up he would take me with him. "I probably nipped his head" and I got friendly with their daughter Rita who must have been about 18 or 20, the result was that I never again had to queue. I was told to go to the side door and just come in and I would be served a lot quicker, I always got a drink of juice or lemonade and a biscuit while I was waiting. All my pals were as jealous as hell this was heaven for a boy of 7 or 8 years old.

As I've said we spent our days playing games like marbles if I hit your marble you had to give me something, usually a card from cigarette packets. Something else we used to do was fish for money down the "cundies" a Dundee word for drains.

What you did was you had a piece of string and a magnet if you were lucky, but normally it was maybe a stone on the end with some Margarine or anything that was sticky, you put the string with your stone or magnet down the drain, and fished about hoping something would stick to it. And in between times you were in and out of the house for a piece (a sandwich) usually made with Syrup, Treacle, Margarine and Jam or Condensed Milk there was always Condensed Milk in the house. Remember there were no Fridges in those days so the Condensed Milk kept for quite a while.

Granny Mags has just reminded me of something else that was popular at the time, we used to sit in the street for hours and pick the tar from between the cassies (a large shaped stone that most streets and roads were made of) you couldn't do that now for all the traffic but in these days you were perfectly safe sitting in the middle of the road picking Tar. Another thing that was common on the Dundee streets were what we called "Coolies," not very politically correct nowadays, these were men from places like Pakistan and India who worked on the Jute boats that regularly berthed in the Docks supplying the Jute Mills. I don't know why but these men walked in a line one behind the other, and we used to have great fun joining in at the back, Granny Mags speaks about walking with them when she was young but her and her pals used to link their arms into them and so walk with them that way. But if her Mum caught her she would get a right telling off.

When you talk about these things its obvious that things have changed dramatically in the world, for a start you would be branded a racist nowadays if you called anyone a "coollie" and also you would stay well away from any strangers, and of course the Jute Mills are long gone and with them the "coolies" and the boats. There was a market down at the docks roughly where the Leisure Centre is now at the bottom of Union Street and this was where they all headed for at the weekend and my Mum used to take Andy and me to see if there were any bargains. Were talking about a time when I would be about 5 or 6 Yrs old, and I was terrified of them at that time.

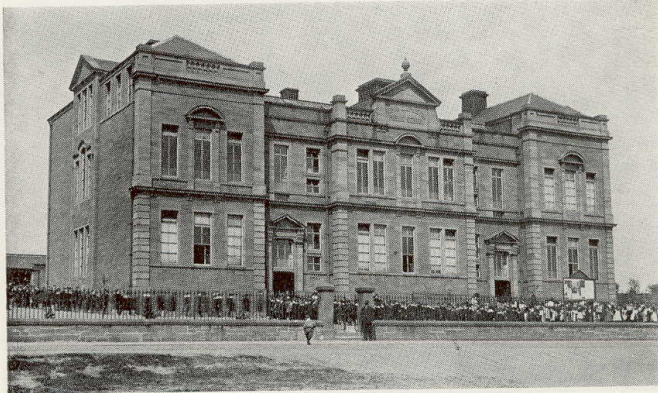
More games that were popular in my young days were "conkers" this was chestnuts we dried them in front of the fire gently, because you didn't want them to dry out too much. You then soaked them in vinegar for a while to harden them up, next you had to bore a hole through it from top to bottom, in order to get a piece of string laced through, you then tied a knot in the string, a wee drop of polish, just a touch to make it look really good, you were ready to do battle. You tossed a coin if you had one to see who would go first; if you lost the toss you had to hold your conker up steady while your opponent belted your conker with his, depending on the damage it was then your turn to try to inflict as much damage as you could on his. I've known boys who had conkers survive fifty battles, but their were also a lot of times when your conker didn't survive the first hit.

Another game we played I can only describe as paper and scissors. This was sometimes used to determine who would go first in a game, if we didn't have a coin, which was nine times out of ten. All you needed for this game was your hands. There were three main gestures in this game, a fist meant a rock, an open hand meant paper, and two fingers extended from your hand meant scissors.

Usually it would start with somebody saying one two three go, this was followed by both of you extending your hands in the preferred manner i.e. if I made a fist (rock) and you extended your open hand (paper) you won because paper can wrap up a rock, and so it went on a rock could break scissors, scissors could cut paper and so on, usually we would play the best of three.

Catty and a Batty was another game that was widely played at this time. The catty was a piece of wood about 4 or 5 inches long pointed at both ends, but never a sharp point, it also had grooves in it at measured intervals, and the batty was any piece of wood usually about a foot long (twelve inches) that could be used as a bat. Basically the point of the game was to put the catty on the Kerb lining up one of the grooves you then struck down with the bat, this hopefully spun the catty in the air you then tried to strike it while it was in the air. You then received points for the amount of grooves that were sticking out over the kerb, plus you counted how long it took the opposition to get the catty back to the kerb. If you had only one groove over the kerb you could hit the catty pretty high in the air, but not score a lot of points. Then if you had say three grooves over the kerb it gets very difficult to get any height on the catty to get a good hit at it.

Another source of great fun in those days was the Bomb Shelters that were at the back of every Tenement, we used to climb on top of them, and then jump off. Some of the older boys used to jump from shelter to shelter quite a jump I left Catherine St. before I was tested to see if I would have been brave enough to attempt the jump (thank goodness). And they made great dens, and could be quite scary when you were inside them. I remember often sitting on the Pletties (Long Verandas) and scaring one and other with stories of ghosts that lived in the shelters, and other products of our imagination, for instance, the man we the hairy teeth, and the man we the white sannies (sandshoes) many a night I would have to shout on my Mum to come and escort me down the stairs and into the house, and then you were terrified to go outside to the toilet, somebody had to come with you and stand outside the door.



Clepington Primary School in Sandeman Street was formerly known as "North Clepington Public School". It forms an interesting architectural contrast with the earlier view of Morgan Academy.

©DC Thomson & Co Ltd

Going back again, I started School when I was five years old, I attended Clepington Primary School in Sandeman Street (I'm writing this in October 2001 and it has just been demolished in September 2001) I was never very happy at primary school due to the fact that my teacher, Miss Low, didn't appear to like several of her pupils. In those days all teachers came from what we called a **Middle Class Society**, with the result

that the kids whose families were better off were treated a lot better than us.

They were also given a lot more attention and there was always a real, or an imaginary divide in the class. This will sound strange to you but every morning we were paraded outside, weather permitting, and the Headmaster, Mr Ramsay (he had the first coloured car I ever saw in my life it was a green Morris Minor), inspected everybody for general cleanliness and tidiness, anyone found to be dirty or have a tear in their clothes were sent home or given a note for their parents. Particular attention was given to our knees and necks. It was good training and remember this was in the days of the **Belt**, it was simple: you either behaved or got the belt. I can testify it was sore, what did I get the belt for? Generally not paying attention and fighting, you didn't give the teachers cheek in those days, the belt was a great deterrent.

Miss Rutherford was my first primary teacher. I remember her being very nice. But that's where all the niceties stopped, enter Miss low into my life. Clepington School had a large catchment area, that meant that some pupils came from the poor areas in the district, and were mixed in with the more affluent areas for instance big houses in the streets off Mains loan etc. and at that time Clepington Road was more expensive to live in. if you pay attention you will see bay windows etc. A lot of those kids talked polite, and from my memory, were treated that bit better from Miss Low.

What I remember is being constantly told I was useless, hopeless, and would amount to nothing. I carried that well into my working life, with the result I found myself applying for jobs that were meaningless and getting bored very quickly. I came home from school one day and as usual stood at the sink washing myself, unknown to me my back was covered in bruises, my dad jumped to the conclusion that I had been fighting, so I was forced to tell Mum and Dad that Miss Low had been punching me in the back.

Next morning back in class and the door burst open, it was my Mum, she chased Miss Low around the class, and into the Headmasters room, the class was in an uproar. She told me that she had told Miss Low in front of the Headmaster that I had better pass my

Qualifying test or she would be back. The upshot was she more or less left me alone after that. But when it came to leaving Primary she couldn't resist a parting shot, in front of the whole class she told me I had passed by the skin of my teeth.



My class at Clepington School around 1949/50 that's me back row extreme left (what a bonnie bunch) note how tidy we all are for the photographer but no this was normal when Mr Ramsay was the Headmaster. Note also Miss Low, the teacher, is not in the picture.

I find this pretty strange, but I have always stated that I didn't think I was very clever when I left the school. But subsequently finished up a Supervisor twice a Foreman then General Foreman and then three times a Manager, I can't honestly say why, but it wasn't until I was promoted in Strathmore Springs, that it dawned on me, that I clearly wasn't the dunce that my schooling had led me to believe. When I think about it now I went to Secondary School believing I was not clever enough, to attain anything, hence the reason for the trouble I got into at Rockwell, and not paying attention at Stobswell. I have read about your early years being very informant. It feels to me as if mines worked in the opposite direction.

Catherine Street was great, we played games all day during the holidays especially football. I always wanted to play in the goal, but Sandy Henderson always got that position (he turned professional and signed for Raith Rovers and Cowdenbeath), he was a great goalie and I learned a lot from him. I also had a girlfriend in those days, Ann Bowman, she was the female star in all our games and we acted out every film we had ever seen, and so we needed Ann to complete our casts. In those days, at Hallowe'en we went around the houses Guising, at that time you earned any money or sweets you were given. You had to sing or relate a story, tell a joke and generally entertain the people of

the house. You didn't stand at the door; you were invited in (it was quite safe in those days).

About 1945 to 1950, Guy Fawkes was a great occasion most of the adults in the street got involved, a big Bonfire was organised, the street was cleared of cars (there wasn't a lot of cars in those days) all the kids were allowed to stay up late, everybody got a sparkler and the adults set off the fireworks. We all sat around the fire and had community singing, later all the kids were packed off to bed, and then the adults probably had a drink and a bit of a party.

1945 - Speaking of adults it seemed in those days that they all played cards, I remember going visiting some of my relations with my Mum and Dad and a game of cards would start (called a schoolly in those days) it went on forever and I found myself put to bed maybe 4 or 5 bairns in the same bed and the adults would be playing cards nearly all night and probably have to come back for the bairns the next day. When I got older I played cards but I'll tell you about that later in the story.

At this time in Catherine Street I can remember the street parties. Once again the neighbours got involved and everybody provided something and you got to the party whether your Parents could afford to contribute or not. There were also Bus trips organised to the Den O' Mains, Camperdown Park, or the Beach. In the days when virtually nobody had a car, trips to these places were fantastic.

Another Prompt from my memory, (these days that's a joke) Ragmen, these were men who came around the tenements shouting "Rags, do you have rags to sell" a woollen blanket was something you could be sure of getting some money for. So it caused a bit of a stir when the Ragman came into the street, kids and adults, would all run out carrying various items of all kinds of material, it was not unheard of for a bairn to run out with something without asking their Mum, it could be anything and nine times out of ten they got a Balloon so if it was maybe your mums cardigan there was hell to pay, you got battered when your dad got home.

Going back again to people who came around the Tenements Selling their were Indian Gentlemen who came around selling various items from suitcases i.e. thread needles and other trinkets, and we must have made their life a misery following them up and down the street. One of my cousins George O'Rourke had a job on an Ice Cream bicycle with Lyons Ice Cream, this was a bicycle with a large box attached, and must have been very difficult to peddle, but he would go through the streets and parks selling his Ice Cream, they must have had large lumps of ice in the box to stop the Ice Cream from melting.

Continuing with the tenements other people who appeared were the Street Singers And Bottle collectors, the street singers would come around and entertain the people by singing the hits of the day, or playing musical instruments, the most popular in my day being the Accordion and the Trumpet, a favourite of the aforementioned Ragmen. Also on the go in these days were the Knife Sharpeners, they came around the streets either pushing a barrow or with a horse and cart, I can remember people queuing out on the street to get their Knives sharpened, remember this was before you could buy sliced bread, my Mum had to cut everything except maybe Butcher meat.

The bottle collectors came along collecting empty bottles. The one I remember was a lad called Andy Brown his call was known all over Dundee 'any empty bottles please ladies please' Many a time me and my pals had to give him a help to get his bag up onto his back, it must have been a very hard life. Another feature at the time were Onion Johnny's these were Frenchmen who came around selling Onions they always turned up pushing bicycles they had all these onions tied together and slung over their shoulders, I cant tell you much more about them but I think they were disappearing in the late Fifties.

1945 - 1950

My brother Andy visited me today, the 31/03/03 and was reading through this story, and asked me about the soldiers at the end of our close during the war. He said in order to get out of our close in Victoria Road you had to pass soldiers who were behind sandbags, the sandbags were built in such a manner that you had to squeeze through a very small gap, and he says they were fully armed with rifles. He also remembers being evacuated to a big house in Drumsturdy Road just outside Dundee, I was a baby at the time, Andy was a sickly bairn and thinks it was part evacuation and part coalescence. He remembers the house very well and getting 12 belts at the one time for sliding down the banister.

He was allowed home to see our Dad who must have been home on leave, when he got home Dad was lying on the bed sleeping soundly with his kit bag and rifle beside him. This must have been the end of the war 1946 because he says we moved to Catherine Street while he was evacuated. It was a kind of scary because, when he was told we had moved, which in itself wasn't a big deal, but one of the people who were looking after him said there wasn't a Catherine Street in Dundee it was in Perth. The first thing that crossed his mind was Mum and Dad may not come back for him, pretty scary when your only 10 years old.

Not very far from Catherine street there was Dirty Megs, this was where we got our penny dainty's (a lump of toffee) and penny Fantas (this was a drink made up of flavours and mostly water nothing remotely like the Fanta of today) but if you had two old pennies to spend you were in Heaven. I always think of the penny dainty when somebody brings up the change over from Pounds shillings and pence to Decimalisation one day the penny dainty cost you one old penny, the very next day it cost one new penny, the equivalent of two old pennies, in the bigger picture this gives you an idea of how the cost of living went up from one day to the next.

Street Games. Hucky Duck this game was played in Catherine Street any amount of us could play, somebody stood with their back against the wall with their hands clasped in their lap, then the next person put their head in the clasped hands somebody else then bent down at the back of them and effectively made a horse, the rest then jumped on your backs and the idea of the game was to unseat the riders while shouting Hucky Duck we thought it was great fun sadly it has disappeared. Kick the Can. This was just another version of hide & seek somebody kicked the can then the person who was out had to run and pick up the can and put it back to where it was sitting originally, so everybody else had to hide in the time it took the person to return the can, count to ten then shout, "Here I come, ready or not." There were no coca cola cans in those days so you normally had to search the bins for a corn beef tin or a soup can they were quite heavy and survived a lot of kicks.

Chicky Melly was a game that was better played in tenements it was simple you knocked on somebody's door and ran away before they answered, or we tied two doors together and knocked on both doors then ran away, we seemed to enjoy ourselves, but it must have been really annoying and sometimes dangerous. Pinner, this was a game played with two pieces of square metal. You started the game by someone throwing their pinner

3 or 4 feet you then tried to hit their pinner, if you missed it was their turn, now this is where it got interesting.

They could be quite close, so you or your opponent shouted” Stanny Hard Bangy “ so you had to stand up very straight put your pinner level with your mouth and try to throw your pinner straight down to hit his pinner, the whole idea of the game was playing for cards, that were at that time given out free in cigarette packets, there were various collections, football players, racing cars, cricketers, birds, soldiers, tanks and airplanes etc. so if he hit your pinner you had to give him a card (you never gave up your favourites). I played with a square bit of metal but if you were lucky enough to have a Dad who worked as an engineer you could have a real flashy one made especially.



This is me at a street party in Beaulay Ave. Kirkton about 1951.

Along came the year 1950 Catherine Street was to be Demolished, we were given the keys to a brand new house in Kirkton, 37 Beaulay Avenue, this was a house with three bedrooms, a kitchen, living room and, lo and behold, a bathroom with a toilet and a bath with running water, this was heaven. We had a garden back and front, unbelievable. I quite readily made new friends Alex Falconer, John Penny, Francie O'Hare, the Berry family and lots more. This was where I started to really enjoy playing football with the likes of Jimmy Gabriel (Dundee FC and Scotland) Jimmy Briggs (Dundee Utd) and a host of Junior Football stars.

I loved playing in goal with all these guys and learned a lot, I only played amateur, juvenile, and signed for one year with St Josephs Juniors and finished up understudy to the aforementioned Sandy Henderson and never kicked a ball in anger, a total waste of time, I was a whole year out of Football. The next season I was right back into Juvenile Football with Lochee Vics. I was an up and down goalkeeper: one day great, next day not so good (terrible), but I must have been half decent because I kept getting my place in the teams I signed for.



Don't Know the Teams but this is Me in action again on Riverside, I'm going to claim I got to this and put it over the bar. (But maybe I didnae)

When we arrived in Kirkton in 1950 the first thing I noticed was there was plenty of places to play that had great expanses of grass to play on. We were only moments away from the Den O' Mains and Caird Park. Across the road was a place we called the Hillocks, it was covered in long grass and there was a big mud slide we called the chocolate brae, brilliant for sliding down with a piece of board and great in the winter with a sledge. My dad, for the first time in his life, had a garden and he really enjoyed growing his vegetables and pottering about. However, there was a down side for us, we had to collect the manure. This consisted of going out with a shovel when a horse appeared in the street, it was a bit embarrassing, but you didn't argue with my Dad, well you could, but you always lost, and it was pretty painful. Mum was in her element as I've said before she was a cleaner, and this house was something she could get her teeth into.

When I was about 12 years old, my mother's sister Auntie Francis, got herself a job as a housekeeper to a single farmer. I think the farm was located someplace in the Sma' Glen. She asked my mum permission to take me with her to the farm as she was not sure what she was getting in to. I was there for about six weeks and this turned out to be the most boring six weeks in my entire life. Of course, the reason I was there was to ensure the safety of Auntie Francis in case the farmer got amorous. So, I found myself, at 12 years old having to sleep with my Auntie: how embarrassing. At the time I must have read about twenty cowboy books, this was the sole entertainment for six weeks.

I remember at this time, my Dad getting a job with Smedleys Farm Products as a night watchman (now known as Security Guards). Their Factory was on the Clepington Road, and as I have said before, things in these days were pretty tough. So Dad used to bring out several cans in his bag, at the end of his shift, to help feed us all. Along came meal times and Mum would start opening cans (there was no labels on them) it then became a bit of a lottery, she would open the first can and maybe find Peas, but more than often than not it might be something like Rhubarb, Berries, Celery, so sometimes you got a nice surprise for after your tea, or she found, after opening a few cans there was nothing suitable. It was hilarious at times, another awful thing that came in these cans was an

early version of dry powdered potatoes called Pom it was absolutely awful. I always pretended to be sick when a can produced Pom. Were these really the good old days?

Although I was enjoying this part of my life things started to happen to me that were out of my control. First of all I was mugged, I was about 11 years old and had been sent to the chip shop for cigarettes for my mum and dad and a bag of chips. On the way home I was stopped by three boys, they looked to me to be about 15 or 16, one of them punched me in the face and they stole my chips, cigs and change. I don't know what was worse: getting mugged or going home to tell my dad I had lost everything.

It's common nowadays, but back in 1951 mugging was treated very seriously and I was taken in a police car all around Kirkton trying to find these boys, but with no luck. I was the centre of attraction for about 24 hours. Shortly after I was out playing when somebody threw a large stone, which hit me in the eye, I was taken to Dundee Royal Infirmary, now demolished, which was situated in Barrack Street, everybody called it Infirmary Brae. I got three stitches then taken home and spoiled for about a fortnight.

I was kept off school and when it was time to go back to the clinic I was taken into the town for a cup of tea in Marks & Spencers - a great treat in those days; I even got a comic, wonderful stuff. Then disaster, I was out playing with my mates and my dad shouted on me to say he was going to my Uncle Steve to fix his radio. The next time I saw him I was 18 years old. I was walking down the old Wellgate, then a street, with Granny Pat when he came walking towards me. What a shock! I thought he was dead.

This reminds me of a time my Dad left to go and work in London. About 1950 I can't remember how long he was away but back he came and everything seemed to be okay. Then one day my Mum went to visit her cousin Tom O'Rourke just up the road in Kirkton. As she was going into the gate the Postie stopped her and gave her the mail to hand into the house, and right on top of the pile was a letter addressed to Mr A Millar c/o O'Rourke. So being my Mum she slipped it into her pocket to read when she got home. Her suspicions had been aroused, anyhow she got home opened the envelope and found a love letter from somebody called Babs Coe from London.

Dad came home from his work and world war three erupted she hit him with a kettle full of water she was screaming at the top of her voice and cursing and swearing. The upshot was he was thrown out; she had already packed his bags while he was at his work. He told me later that it was an old suitcase she had packed, later that night he got washed and shaved to go out for a pint and decided to put some clean clothes on. Can you imagine he had carried that case full of his belongings all the way up the road, opened it up and found my Mum had cut up every article of clothing?

She had cut the feet of his socks the bottoms off his ties the collars and cuffs off his shirts, she had even cut the tops off his shoes, there was nothing left whole. Jamie I can assure you of one thing your Great Granny was somebody you did not mess with - 5ft of holy terror. My Dad told me that in an early argument things had got quite heated and she had said to him, "Lift your hands and hit me if you want to, but if you do, don't ever go to sleep." He said he would never ever hit her, but she meant every word she said.

Things changed a lot after my dad left, money was really tight, that's when my mum started to work really hard, having to take three part-time jobs. The year he left was terrible, it was very close to Xmas and mum was left with no money at all, it must have been awful for her. I was twelve years old and still looked for something at Xmas but that year we had to rely on the Salvation Army to give us a food parcel; that was the first and last time I never had a Xmas present.

About that time I went to Rockwell secondary school, another disaster - all my friends were at Stobswell, so I was not a happy chappie. First day at School I got into a fight with a boy from Baldovan Approved School, which resulted in me getting six of the belt from a Mr. Smart (he, like your Papa played for Dundee Utd.). Although nobody bothered me after that I never ever settled down at that school and was forever getting into trouble. I was eventually expelled as being disruptive and undisciplined, this resulted in me going to Stobswell beside all my mates from Clepington - this was great. I started to fit in and behave myself.

Quick word about Bookies Runners, just now, but I will explain further later on. I will mention, just now, about my Dad your Great Grandfather who was a Bookies Runner in Kirkton working on Balgowan Avenue, Circa 1951 but there was a twist to this, he worked for his brother Steve who lived in Balgowan Avenue. He would(lift the lines) as it was known as in those days and hand them into his Brothers house, imagine how I felt when one day Dad asked me to take a message up to my Uncle Steves to find that a bedroom had been transformed into a Bookmakers Office, one whole wall was taken up with a huge blackboard with all the runners and riders printed on it.

There were strangers getting the latest prices on the horses and placing their bets, it was unbelievable, I ran all the way home to tell my Mum but was well warned, that if I told anyone about this, that my Dad and Uncle would go to Jail. Occasionally my Dad would get word from the local Bobbie that they were going to arrest him so this gave him ample time to get rid of all his lines, he would then be found with only a few bogus lines on him (why would the police warn him, simply because they put bets on with him themselves). On these occasions he would be taken down to the Police Station and charged Re. Illegal betting, Uncle Steve would then go around to my Mum and give her enough money to bail him out. Within about half an hour he was back on his pitch lifting lines.

During this period we had to move to a smaller house in Linlathen, 1953 I think, 71 Blacklock Crescent this was a two bedroom flat in a small tenement, only four houses in the block. Next door to us was a Mrs M'Callum she was originally from Glasgow and was quite a character, she would ask me to go to the shops for her and you always got "tuppence" or "thruppence" as a reward I would then say thanks, and she made the same reply every time, (dinnae thank me, thank yer Mither when she's knocking 'Hell' oot ye).

Directly below us were Mr & Mrs Clark, Norrie and Margaret. He worked in the Cleansing Dept emptying the bins, in those days they had to lift the bins on their shoulder and empty them into the Lorry. A very hard and dirty job, he had to strip out of his outer clothing and hang it on a nail outside the door, Margaret wouldn't let him in the house with his dirty clothes. There was an incident with them that I'll never forget, one night about two o'clock in the morning we got a knock on the door, it was Norrie he was convinced he had a burglar, he asked my Mum if I could go downstairs with him. Somebody was in the bedroom with his child and there was noises coming out of the room. I agreed to go downstairs with him, but remember I was only about 13 or 14 at the time and I was scared. Eventually, I picked up enough courage to open the bedroom door, did I find a burglar, no, just a happy baby laughing in its cot.

Something I am not proud of, but has to be mentioned, is Linlathen was the type of place where you had to be able to look after yourself; I found out the hard way when I fell out with a young boy. Now it has to be said that I was about 2 Yrs older than him, anyhow we weren't long in Linlathen when he and I had an argument that resulted in a fight. If you could call it that, I did the same as I'd always done when asked to fight before, I put up my fists" very bad mistake" He kicked me between the legs then kicked me again when I was on the Ground. This type of fighting was completely foreign to me, but it was a lesson I wasn't allowed to forget. About three days later I was walking up Riddell Terrace and coming down were two of the guys mates pals, and they started to ridicule me for being beaten by somebody a lot younger than me and asking if I wanted to fight any of them, I offered to fight both of them together and managed to beat both of them. I was then accepted and generally left alone.

By the time I started to grow up in Linlathen I had progressed to cards and pitch and toss; both illegal at the time. In the Fifties you weren't allowed to gamble at all, especially in the streets or parks, but it didn't stop us. Pitch and Toss has survived over the years, I still see kids playing on the streets, but what you don't see is them running away when the Police appear, but we did. The rules are fairly simple you used a wall or drew a line then threw your coins at the line or wall and the nearest won, sometimes the rules would dictate, you either touched the wall or straddled the line to win.

Although I was never really clever at school, I did start to enjoy going to school and that was different. Two incidents that spring to mind from my time at Linlathen, was one staying off to watch Hungary playing Scotland on T.V 1954. Hungary had just hammered England, 7-1 and here was a chance to see Puskas and their Goalkeeper Groszics, George Ormond's Dad had just bought a T.V.(he must have had a win on the horses) so we decided to stay off School, but it must have been the worst kept secret in the world, his house was packed, boys just kept turning up his Mum and Dad must have been working. Hungary scored six goals that day but what an honour it was to see these players at their best. Puskas Played at that time for Real Madrid in Spain, this came about because of the Hungarian Uprising against Russia and a lot of people had to flee the country. I was lucky enough to also see Real Madrid beat Eintracht of Germany in the Final of the European Cup At Hampden Park I think the score was 7-3 the best game I ever seen in my life.

The other incident I remember was with Jimmy Douris it was icy in the playground and we had a big slide going and we were all pushing each other, any how I pushed Jimmy and he fell on the slide and banged his head, now remember this was playtime, and when jimmy got mad you got out of his way, so I took one look at him and took off out the gate with Jimmy hard on my heels I ran and ran and we both finished up at the Swannie Ponds (Stobswell ponds) completely knackered, so instead of fighting we had to sit down on one of the seats. It then dawned on us that we had run away from school, we were frightened to go back to school so we went home to Jimmy's house. But it didn't change anything, next morning we were given six of the belt from the headmaster.

Another funny incident that comes to mind, one day I couldn't do P. E (Physical Education) and got put into Jimmy's class it was the Headmaster that was taking the class

and he was giving them a spelling lesson now remember this was boys at fifteen years old he was getting them to write on the board B is for Bat C is for Cat I don't know what had been going on before I got there but I can assure you I had spread it all over the school, it took months of ribbing Jimmy, in fact I sometimes still mention it to him but he denies all knowledge of this incident.

I just met him the other day Friday 7/02/03 and he had just retired from D.C. Thompson's (the Courier) he is still a great pal. I passed my Qualifying exam at Clepington 1955 so I could progress to Secondary. I left School with no Certificates, no excuses, it was my fault for not paying attention when I had the chance.

I still see Jim Douris in the Fairmuir Club. Jim was our best man when me and your Granny Pat got Married 28th December 1957. Can you imagine a marriage happening nowadays like ours? We were married at 11 am in the Registrar in City Square. After the ceremony, the reception, if you could call it that, was to be held in my mum's house.

My brothers, best man, mates and myself went away to The Volunteer Arms, Constitution Street and your Granny Pat, my mum and the rest of the females who were there, went back to the house to prepare all the food.

I suppose my brothers and my mates thought they were doing me a favour by plying me with drink on my wedding day. The upshot was that we finished up in the Gaumont Cinema where me and a couple of others fell asleep. This sobered us up and then we made our way to my mum's house in Linlathen.

Mum had catered for about twenty-five people but this proved not to have been such a good idea. The previous Saturday, 21st December, Uncle Tom's funeral was held and there was a big fight at his wake. This was my mum's brother and so she did not drink that day. The cause of the fight, someone wanted a sing-song and my mum objected to this strongly, saying, "You are not singing at my brother's funeral." At this point, someone told her to shut up and pushed her; this caused my two brothers to get involved.

To cut a long story short, this meant that none of my relatives would speak to one another. So, most of the people invited did not turn up and we were left with about eight people who did turn out. What a disaster, nothing to be proud of our wedding day.

By the time I was fifteen we moved to Linlathen; this was where I grew up. Rock & roll was just starting, Elvis Presley had his first hit in Britain it was Heartbreak Hotel and on the B. side: I Was The One.

Cards are still played in houses and casinos all over the world but there was an element of excitement when you played in the park or in a close knowing it was illegal, many a time somebody would shout here's the Polis everybody would grab their money and try to get some of the pot too, we just scattered. I was never involved but witnessed games where a lot of money was at stake and sometimes led to violence.

Linlathen was unique in other ways too as I've said earlier gambling was illegal and any Bookmakers were in the middle of the towns but that didn't stop the people of Linlathen. In Blacklock Cres. There was a lady who accepted bets at her door, these people were known as Bookies Runners, they accepted the bets then passed them onto the bookmakers. There was also a family the Taylors who sold cigarettes and other items from their house in Mossiel Cres.

On the opposite side of the building lived George Ormond who was to turn out to be my best friend. George Emigrated to South Africa when he was about 19 after that we lost touch. The next I heard about him was his death notice in the Evening Telegraph, this was in 2000, apparently he was robbed at gunpoint coming home from work and took some kind of asthma attack, he never recovered.

The other pals I had at the time were Big Jim Douris, Brian Wilson, Peter Slane, Billy Montgomerie Tom Hunter, Alec Balfour and various others.



left George Ormond, Me (In the middle) and Peter Slane Continental

About 1953, I also started to listen to my favourite music 'Country'. The first country singer I listened to was Hank Williams, and I am still listening to him now. He died in 1953 and in Country music they are still singing his songs, and writing songs about him. I started to go to the local Community centre in the Mossgiel School this is where I started to learn to dance, Rock& roll, called Jiving at that time, and modern dancing, we were taught the Tango, the Waltz, Slow Foxtrot, the Quickstep and also Scottish Country Dancing. Remember this was 1955 and these dances were what were being played in the Dancehalls.

I started to go to Robbie's in the Hawkhill, 1956 they used to put cards on a stand announcing the next dance, when it was a Jive the card they put up was an 'Extra' in most dancehalls it was customary to go up to a girl and say "can I have this dance please" but in Robbie's you only had to go up to the girl and flick your head to the side this was enough to get the girl up on the floor to dance.

Girls coming to Robbie's for the first time were horrified, and usually either ignored the boy and felt insulted, or asked him what he wanted. There was always fights in Robbie's. As soon as a fight started the girls used to jump up on the seats and hit the boys that were fighting, with the heels of their shoes, I got into a fight once and the guy never hit me but the girls nearly killed me.

Other Dancehalls we frequented were the Empress, which reputedly, had the best dance floor in Dundee, but there was always a lot of trouble. The Empress was situated down at the docks right next to the old Royal Arch. We also went to Kidd's Rooms in Lindsay St. this was a bit upmarket and there was very rarely any bother. But there was one incident that stands out in my memory. At the end of the night George Ormond and I went to the cloakroom to collect our coats, I bumped into this lad and his coat fell on the floor, "pick it up" he said.

Now I didn't consider myself a great fighting man but I wasnae anybody's mug either, so, my answer was "pick it up yoursel" this guy was about 3 or 4 inches smaller than me so there was no way I was picking up his coat. The next thing he said was "pick it up or I'll belt your P---". I said, "no way am I picking up your coat I've said I'm sorry and that's enough" Bang! The next thing I knew I was picking myself up off the floor, he had knocked me right out, I found out later he was the Scottish Amateur Flyweight Boxing Champion. At that time we went all over entering Jiving contests, the Labour halls in Blackscroft, the Masonic Halls in Downfield, all the Community Centres in Dundee Perth, Carnoustie, I remember winning quite a few, "Eh Wisnae a bad Jiver".

I loved Linlathen it was a great place to grow up. It was about this time I noticed there was a species on the earth called girls, and I had my fair share of Girlfriends. One incident that springs to mind was when I was about fifteen, we all decided to go camping for a weekend; there was to be three girls and three of us boys. It was to be a well-kept secret that girls were going. I was working at the time as I had started work when I was fifteen.

Anyhow we were all looking forward to our time away and I was working on the Saturday morning so as soon as I was finished I couldn't wait to get home, get in the bath and get away. Imagine my surprise and embarrassment when I got home to find my Mum and three girls waiting for me. The girls had decided to come for me as opposed to meeting down at the bus station as planned. Now this caused a couple of problems first of all I had to explain to my Mum why there were girls going on this trip, and on top of that George Ormond lived in the same block so his Mum and Dad had seen the girls going up to my house with all their gear and wondered what was going on.

Anyhow after a lot of moaning and groaning and pleading we were allowed to carry on but well warned girls in one tent and boys in the other. So off we went to Longforgan the idea being that we were going to go to the berries to make a few shillings spending money. Everything went well, we made a bit of money, went to sleep and were wakened in the morning by Barbara Wardens sisters boyfriend, he had been sent out to sort everything out, and came on like a raging bull, he started by knocking our tents down threatened to hit me then belted George, the girls were bundled into his car and we were left to sort the mess and get back to Dundee.

My brother, Andy, went berserk when he heard that this guy had threatened me and hit George, Andy would have been about 19 at this time and although I couldn't go to him if I got into bother this was a grown man that had threatened me. One night this guy had dropped his girlfriend off and was returning to his car when he was confronted by Andy and a couple of his mates and although there was no violence he was left in no doubt that if he wanted to continue coming into Linlathen he would have to apologise to us. He did apologise. My Mother went spare and read the riot act to me and George saying we should have foreseen the trouble it was going to cause everybody, another lesson learned on life's highway.

One thing that stands out about George no matter how much notice he gave, his clothes were never ready for going out, many a night we were all looking forward to getting down town early, only to be held up waiting on his shirt getting dried and ironed or his trousers getting pressed. I took bad with this because my Mum always had my clothes ready for me when I got home from my work or made me sort them out the night before. One thing we did have in common was our Dads, my Dad drunk every penny he got his hands on and Georges Dad would bet on anything horses, dogs, George has told me his Dad would go and lose all his wages, our Mums must have had a terrible time getting through the week with a family to feed and no money.

A place I use to frequent, around 1956, on a Saturday morning was the D.P.M. café in Reform street, the D.P.M. stood for Dundee Pasteurised Milk Company they were the biggest dairy in Dundee at the time and had there premises at the bottom of Mains Road. But to get back to why I went to this café it was simple a girl called Josie Grimes. I met her in Linlathen and followed her about like a collie dog, I went about with her for about 9 months we would go to the pictures, the dancing, go for walks and generally spend a lot of time together and even went to the church with her.

She was a Catholic and never missed Sunday Mass at St Vincent's at the top of Pitkerro Drive in Linlathen, and they also ran a club where there was dancing, My Mum couldn't believe I was going to church but I thought I was in love, so it felt like the end of the world when she broke it off, I was sixteen and shattered. Apart from anything else this was the first time I'd been dumped, my feelings and pride were given a severe dunt.

One thing that was constant was my Mum, we must have been a terrible worry for her, but she would never go to bed until she knew we were home safe. Two incidents that spring to mind that must have worried her to death were when she found a half a motorbike under our bed, Andy had got himself involved with Eddie Taylor and they had stolen this motorbike, didn't know what to do with it, so took it to bits, and put it under their beds, luckily on this occasion the Police were not involved. The other incident that springs to mind was an assault on a Clippie (Conductress on the Buses) any how there had been an incident on a bus where a Clippie had been assaulted, the police were anxious to get somebody quick, so started to pull everybody in for Identification Parades to see if the girl could identify anybody.

Unknown to me or my Mum they already had Andy in Bell Street (the Police Station in Dundee was always referred to as Bell Street) when they came for me, my Mum nearly had a heart attack, she was saying things to the police like, he's only a bairn I was about fifteen, hardly a bairn. We all participated, in the lineup but she couldn't pick anyone out so it was then thought that it had been someone from out of the estate.

Before I forget a great thing happened to me in Linlathen, (Circa 1983) when I was Sales Manager with Strathmore Springs I had occasion to take a lorry home and arranged to drop it off at the drivers house and pick up my car, so I asked him for his address and could you imagine my surprise when he said 71 Blacklock Crescent, so it was great to go back into a house, that I had spent a lot of my young days. By the way he got his lorry but I never got my car, I had put it in to the garage to get the brakes looked at, and somebody had not put the wheel back properly and it had come off while the driver was coming down the Forfar Road, he was very lucky, he was uninjured. The car was a write off and I finished up getting a new car.

1959, Another prompt, Pawnshops, this was a shop where people took various belongings to hand over in exchange for money. Your Great Granny, my Mum, had to use these shops after my dad left us, and later your Granny Pat and I had to use them when I was laid off or Unemployed.

I'll try and explain how they worked. People Went to these places with various items the most popular as I recall were Wedding Rings, clothes, bedding, and generally anything that was presentable. You went to the Pawn Shop with the item and depending on what it was you received back cash, not to the full value, well below that. They gave you a ticket and when you could afford it you went back to the shop paid the Redemption Fee and got your article back.

It was common practice at that time for people to go in on the Monday of every week to pawn there Suit and shoes, and go back on the Friday when they got Paid to get them out again, and be wearing them to the Dancing that night. What cannot be forgotten is if you couldn't afford to pay to get them back (you were given maybe Six Months) the Pawn Shop was legally entitled to sell the items in a different part of the Shop. The part of the Shop where you handed in your items was sectioned off for a bit of privacy.

I remember a story regarding your Granny Pat, if you can imagine going to the Pawn Shop was not something you were going to advertise so you tried to be a bit discreet maybe getting off at the bus stop past the street the Pawn Shop was in, anyhow your Granny got on the Bus to go to the Pawn Shop and met one of her friends so to throw her friend off the scent she got off the Bus at the next stop leaving her friend on the bus, her pal saying she was getting off at the next stop, to cut a long story short they both met in the Pawn shop and had a good laugh at there attempts to hide the fact that they were both ashamed to be going to the Pawn Shop. They were a necessary evil in those days and helped to feed many a hungry family.

I've jumped a bit - I left school in 1955 and got an interview for a Store Assistant with a company called Lindsay&Robertson in King St. I'll never forget it, Mr Lindsay, the owner, asked me what time I finished school on Friday, I replied about 2 o'clock and he said, "That's a bit late so just start Saturday morning." Can you imagine no holiday, no settling in period, just right off to work the next day?

I've resigned myself to telling you the truth, so first of all I was in the early part of my working life in numerous jobs. Part of the problem was I worked in jobs that a monkey could have done, I can't think of any of these early jobs that I really enjoyed. I'll list some of them, though, but this is a part of my life I am not proud of. I was a storeman and then I started an apprenticeship as a Painter, that was a laugh all I seemed to do was wash the bosses car every second day, and when I wasn't busy doing that I was wire brushing fences or rone pipes etc. I then worked in the Timex on nightshift and hated it. I then went into the Building Trade and was with a lot of companies i.e. the building was finished you were paid off. I was a charge hand in South Mills, I went to work in a company called Holokrome (light engineering) Then I got offered A job on the building of the Michelin Factory I started as a Labourer and finished up General Foreman I got a nickname while there. Because I hadn't been seen in the trade for a while I was asked where I had been working, as soon as I said the Holokrome I was then known as Holokrome Joe this was in the sixties/seventies and I still meet people who call me Holokrome.

The Michelin. Robert McAlpine had the contract for building the Michelin Tyre factory. The first thing they came up against from the Shop Stewards was Dundee Targets. This was a bonus scheme and resulted in the workforce getting excellent wages. I was earning as a General Foreman in charge of everything that moved on the park, and that meant everything we even had a Banksman on a forklift, this was never heard of before, somebody following a forklift taking notes of everything that the forklift moved, this was then paid into the Bonus. I was earning about 80 to 90 Pounds a week. Two years after

the job finished I was earning a basic wage of £32.50 a week as a spare driver with Strathmore Springs.

At the Michelin it was common practice for all the Foreman to leave the canteen last, this was to make sure nobody was trying to hide so they could sneak off the job. This day we left last as usual, and weren't far down when we heard a whoosh then a sheet of flame shooting up in the air, from this trench, we then heard the screams. A guy had been cutting concrete pipes with a Stihl Saw, most of the morning the petrol from the saw had been leaking onto his clothes, as a result after lunch time, he started the saw and a spark ignited and set his clothes on fire. We rushed into the trench and tried to smother the flames with our jackets, the guy was screaming. We managed to get the flames out and someone sent for an Ambulance. I will never forget him screaming as he was put in the Ambulance, we could still hear him screaming as the Ambulance pulled away. He survived but I never met anyone again, who had heard anything about him, after that.

I'm going to continue with my working career and get it over with, when the Michelin was finished I was once again paid off. I got a job right away with Scottish Special Housing Association driving a van and labouring to Plumbers cleaning houses etc. again I was paid off when it got slack, I went to work for Elena Mae Cameras again driving a van there is some good photos of your Mum and one of her pals taken at Leven in the back of that van. Then came the career I'd been waiting on "Sales" I was asked if I would like a job selling Lemonade With Strathmore Springs in Corso Street in Dundee.

I was with them about Sixteen years, Started as Spare Driver then lorry driver going around the shops then was Promoted to Van Sales Supervisor, in Coronary Care in Ninewells of all places, when I saw the Managing Director Mudie Barrie and the Foreman Bert Butchart, I thought I was going to be sacked, reason being, it was obvious with my Heart condition, I wasn't going to be able to drive lorries or lift cases full of lemonade all day. Promotion continued with Sales Manager then eventually Depot Manager for Dundee and Forfar.

I wasn't long with them when I had a wee bump with my lorry. Parked outside a shop on Blackness road on completing my delivery I followed procedure and walked behind my lorry to make sure it was clear. Jumped in the cab checked my mirrors then reversed ! bang. A Mini had drawn up after I had got in the cab and she was on double yellow lines. I was in the right, and told her so, she disagreed. As procedure we then had to exchange details for insurance purposes. I asked can I have your name please yes she replied I cant remember her first name but second name was Barrie, her address was next, Hazel Drive, (Managing Directors Daughter) I immediately admitted fault and told her to forget about any damages as my company would sort that out. Away she went, her dad was at the Aberdeen Depot that day, after I returned to the Depot I was told to call Aberdeen. The conversation went something like this. Mr Mudie " I believe you decided against leaving the Company today " Me " yes sir "

Because we had multiple deliveries it wasn't possible to tie the crates on plus the fact they all fitted into one and other. Anyhow we had an extra delivery that day and I had a new van boy, regular lad had to go home early that day, the result was instead of using two

pallets this boy, while I was writing the invoice, put all the empties on one pallet, the result was this one pallet was stacked very high. We took off down Princes St and crash the cases with bottles had came flying off the lorry, my fault entirely I should have checked. The entire street was blocked, the driver of a car at the back of me in wanting to miss the glass decided to turn his wheel and crashed into the railings outside what used to be Menzies shop. I wanted to exchange Insurance details which we did, but he decided, he wanted the Police.

A Panda car turned up with one Constable who then started to take our details. That was fine when he was finished he then proceeded to charge me with an insecure load and causing an accident, I informed him that the driver was responsible as it was his decision to drive into the railings, don't know if that law has changed but at that time that was the case. but the policeman was adamant he was charging me with causing the accident, at this point I asked for his details for our Insurance company. Now I can't for legal purposes name the driver or the policeman but it was not a common name. They both gave the same name, so I enquired whether they were related and back came the answer yes. I then asked for someone with a higher rank than him to attend. An Inspector turned up and we explained the problem, upshot was the charge of causing the accident was dropped, and the only thing I was charged with was insecure load. Moral of the story make sure the both parties are unrelated.

My other insecure load happened on the Perth Road this time I did have the load tied down. It was the middle of Winter and I hit a bit of black ice the result was the lorry skidded, left the road, I managed to turn the wheel when we come up on the grass, came back on the road hitting the kerb as I did so a few cases came off and scattered over the road there was quite a bit of broken glass but on top of that the lemonade in the bottles had immediately turned to ice making the road even more dangerous. The van boy kept an eye on the traffic and I blocked off the road with cases, and proceeded to clean up as much as I could.

Somebody had sent for the Police a car turned up with two constables one started to help me while the other directed the traffic onto the middle reservation, to bypass the mess. We got it all cleared up and they sent for a gritter. They then had no option but to charge me with an insecure load. I had lost a good bit of stock so two cases weren't going to make a huge difference. Two cases of mixed lemonade went into the boot of the Police car. I appeared in court and the Sherriff said he hadn't seen such a glowing report before, of how well I had organized the situation, fines at that time were approx. £40 and 3 points on your license. That day I got fined £5 and no points on my license. These Policemen two great guys.

Another time we were working in Scone and were about to finish up, I was writing up my log Book when the van boy said Joe look at that fire over there I looked up and noticed right away that it was the Lorry that was on fire. We jumped out and started pouring bottles of lemonade on it but we were struggling, luckily somebody had called the Fire Brigade and they doused it very quickly with not a lot of damage to the lorry. They went away happily with a few case of lemonade. They couldn't take anything like that

nowadays, things have changed, but what was a few bottles of lemonade to saving our lorry.

Perth has always been a very busy place so try to imagine what I was going through, I'm driving over the bridge going into Perth, and approaching the traffic lights, when I put my foot on the brake to slow down " no brakes " luckily, the lights turned to green and there were only two cars in front of me. Seven and a half ton lorry quite full with goods and I'm hurtling towards a very tight left hand turn. I crunched down the gears and somehow managed to slow the lorry down and pulled into the side of the road outside the Sherriff Court. Nowadays a Swat team and ambulances etc. would have been alerted, but no just a lone policeman shouting you can't park there, I explained to him what had happened and sent for the company mechanic, he fixed the brakes ?

We continued on our rounds very late, and eventually had our last delivery at Abernyte, left the shop, and had only travelled a short distance, when the brakes failed again. Now I don't know if you have ever been to Abernyte but if this had happened a few hundred yards farther along the road, I doubt very much whether I would be writing this story, have a look at it sometime, very steep, twisty road, we were very lucky. I now know in hindsight we should have left the lorry, and let it be towed in, so the repair could have been done properly.

How can you forget your first day as Sales Supervisor. We had a new Managing Director and he sent for me that first day and asked me to go to a shop in Strathmartine road and check to see if their sales invoice tallied with the one he handed me. The driver in question was a very good friend of mine and had been in the job since being a van boy, anyhow I knew the invoice was false and the shop didn't exist. What do you do, I approached the Supervisor I was taking over from, and asked his advice. None of us wanted this guy to get sacked. I was told to go home have a cup of tea and report back saying I couldn't find the shop. So back to the Managing Director to report, this didn't go down very well but " seeing this was my first day he would give me a second chance " he handed me another invoice, and informed me if I came back with the same story, I would be sacked along with my friend. So I was forced to tell him the shop did not exist. He then told me I had to meet the driver when he came back from his deliveries and sack him. What an introduction, that guy never spoke to me for years. He did eventually agree that I had no choice.

Not long after I was promoted to the Depot Managers position I was sent for by the same Managing Director telling me he wanted me to spend a week in the Forfar Depot. Here was the catch: he suspected that everybody connected to the lorries were stealing. At this time there was about 5 or 6 drivers with van boys, and my job was to make sure none of them were left working there by the end of the week " sack them all " it turned out I did find enough evidence, to prove the Managing Directors suspicions correct, in all but one case. I duly reported back that this guy was clean. This was accepted at Head office and the next morning, off he went on his rounds. After he left I was approached by a Police Inspector and Constable saying they had witnessed a theft from the premises the night before. It turned out that the young female Constable had witnessed the aforementioned

driver putting some lemonade and juice in the back of his car. He had hidden this in some pallets sitting in the yard.

I had no choice but to report to Head Office what the Police had witnessed, I also informed them, that because the police had witnessed the crime, they alone would be charging him, it was out of our hands. Word came back to sack him for this offence, when he came back from his rounds. After telling him we were letting him go, because of what the Police had witnessed, he asked when he could pick up his wages, 3 pm was the answer. What a mistake he proceeded to spend the next hour or so in the Pub, came back for his wages, and proceeded to punch me in the face, he was a big lad and he didn't miss me, I was left with a big black eye and my pride hurt, not my fault.

About this time I had another horrific incident with a person being burned. Granny Mags was invited to a ladies Jewelry evening in a cottage on Lintrathen Estate. At that time there were two entrances, I decided to go in off the Arbroath Road now we are talking about a long dirt road to get to this cottage. We didn't have far to go, when two young boys appeared one frantically waving me to stop. I still shudder when I think of the sight of one of these boys, clothes burnt off him, and his skin peeling off in long strips. They had started a fire beside some old tyres and he had fell into the burning tyres, he was screaming in agony. I told Granny Mags to run to the house and call the police and ambulance service, and let them know the make of my car and registration number, I was going to head for the Dundee Royal Infirmary.

I took off, with this young boy lying on the back seat of the car still screaming. I drove as fast as was safely possible, lights on full, and every few seconds pressing the horn. I did not stop for any Red Lights, I had seen enough ambulances, and Police cars slowing down and checking it was safe to cross. How could no one have seen me. The people at the cottage had called the Hospital, and a trauma team were waiting at the door. I don't think I have ever been so glad to see a load of doctors and nurses in my life as I was to see these life savers. The boy survived, we found that out, when a letter appeared in the Evening Telegraph, thanking the gentleman, who had taken the boy to the Hospital. Apparently, he spent a long time in Bridge of Earn Hospital outside Perth. Thank God for a lucky wee boy, still wonder what would have happened, if we hadn't came along when we did.

The Company, Strathmore Springs, was Bought over by Woodrows Of Dunfermline I stayed with them for Four Years as Senior Sales Executive But it was never the same, I had a female boss and her and I never saw eye to eye. So, in 1988 one of my customers, Gordon Brodie, asked me if I would like to run a Pub he was about to purchase, The Birkhill Inn, I accepted. I worked there as Manager with Granny Mags for two years, quite enjoyed it, but when an opportunity came along to go back into sales I jumped at it, this was 1990 I went to work for Sun Life Of Canada selling Life assurance Pensions Unit Trusts etc. This was a big change in direction, no salary Commision Only. My sales never fell below £1,500 to £2000 a month it wasn't a bad living for that time

I started as Representative Trainee went to Sheffield for two weeks passed my induction course and because of my age and illness, (This was when I had my first procedure on

my heart called an Angioplasty.) I was voted by the Trainers as the most likely to fail in this career. By the time I went down to Basingstoke (Head Office) I was the only person left out of the class, so I had to join another class of about Twelve, I passed all the exams and by the time I moved on to the next stage I was again the only person left in that class too. Within nine months I was a Sales Supervisor with responsibility for two Reps. One year later I was promoted to Acting Unit Manager, then on the first of January 1993 I was promoted again to Sales Manager (must have been doing something right) on the 11th of March I had a Heart attack and had to go into Aberdeen Royal Infirmary for two Angioplasty's. I then had to stop working and go on to the company's Long Term Disability programme this allowed me to remain employed and getting a salary until I was of age to go on the Company pension scheme and the Old Age Pension when I am 65. (2005)

I forgot to mention my contribution to building the Tay Road Bridge, (Circa 1960) I worked for about a year in the Boat Yard as a Platers helper in the Boilermakers Yard and most of my time was spent working on the Box Girders that are the mainstay of the construction of the road on the Bridge. Another one of my duties there was helping the Platers when ships came in for repair, what was always surprising was the ships that were crewed by white people were always dirty and untidy, but the ships with the Indian, Pakistan's or Bangladesh were always immaculate, you could eat your dinner off the floor. That's a saying that has survived over the years to describe somebody who keeps a clean house.

I met your Granny Pat in early 1957 and we were married on the 28th of December of that year. I was 17 and she was 19, we were together 21 years and were blessed with a beautiful daughter, your Mum, so we must have been doing something right.

Going back a bit another job I was in was a Jute Mill where the Odeon Cinema is now. I find it amazing that you and I, have sat in the pictures, exactly where I worked about Forty five years ago, it was called Douglasfield Works, at that time the most modern Jute Mill in the world. Anyhow the story behind this is that Granny Pat and I got married on the 28/12/57 and I was made redundant on the day before, what a start to married life. So my track record with jobs was I suppose pretty awful, your Granny Pats mother and father didn't like me very much and I can now see why, I certainly would not have been happy if your Mum had taken up with anybody like that, but as I have said it wasn't always my fault. The most difficult thing about writing this is trying to tell the truth, because there's always something's your not very proud of but I will try my best.

I must also tell you about my Boxing career, as I have said before, my dad was a fairly good boxer, and a bit of a hard man, so it was natural that I would be interested in the sport, so I joined the Hawkhill Boxing Club situated at the bottom of the Hawkhill at the end of Park lane. Training consisted of going on the punch bag skipping, running and overhead sparring ball, I must have been going for about 8 weeks when along came my first fight. I went into the ring to use all these skills I'd just learned and got battered, that I'm afraid, was my first and last fight. I have followed the sport from a safe distance ever since, it's a lot less painful watching it on the TV. Football was a large part of my life at that time and I had supported Dundee Utd since I was young, I remember My Dad taking me to Dundee's games in the hope that I would support Dundee. So later on it was quite natural to go to Dens with your pals one week then back to Tannadice the next, there was no segregation in those days although there was some trouble, it was usually when Celtic and Rangers came to town.

Smoking and Drinking lets get that out of the way, the Smoking is easy I've never smoked in my life, that's that taken care of. The drinking is a bit different I'm afraid I started when I was about 14(1954) my first pint was in the old Hawkhill Tavern this was in the old Hawkhill part of it is still there, then it was over to the Dancehall, Robbie's about two pints and you were falling about. I cannae believe I was so stupid but at the time we thought it was great.

I must digress at this point to let you know that I was at a funeral yesterday, the 10/12/02 I mentioned earlier my first girlfriend was Ann Bowman away back in 1945, it was her Mums she lived to the great age of 88.

Back to the story, Andy my brother, was 18 1954 at the time and legally allowed to be in a Pub (in those days you had to be 18 to be allowed into a Pub) so this particular Pub had partitions, so I'm drinking my pint when I got a crack across the head Andy grabbed me by the collar and threw me out onto the street. Andy was four years older and always belting me. Sometimes for paltry things but generally I was probably a pain in the butt.

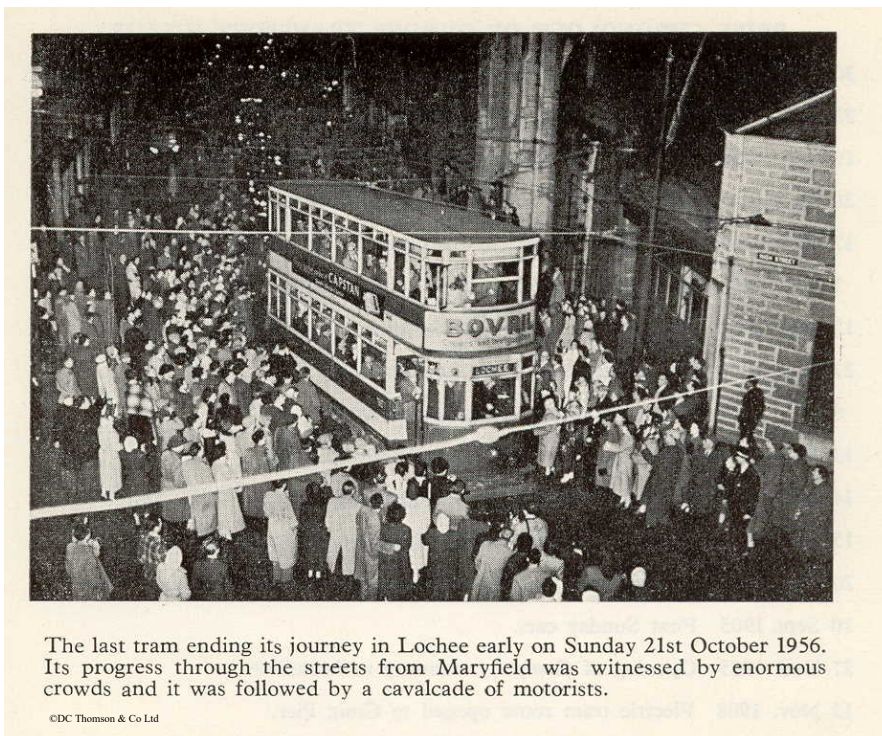
1956, one incident I remember, Andy was going away to Carnoustie to the Beach Ballroom so I decided to borrow one of his Teddy Boy suits, it was Brown with a Brown velvet collar and gold link buttons, with Cream shirt, brown tie, finished with brown socks and brown suede shoes (known as Beetle Crushers) I was feeling A1 top o the heap.

All my mates were jealous, I was having a ball, and at the end of the night I took a girl called Barbara Warden home, we were standing at her house in Linlathen, and at that time there was a lot of Forkies(Earwigs),so I had to stand with my back to the wall in case she got a forkie on her, unknown to me I was leaning on a fair sized nail the next thing I knew was a big ripping sound, the jacket was torn right down the back. Andy went berserk he nearly killed me and it taught me a lesson, I never again touched any of Andy's clothes.

I digress again, this is the 13/01/03 and on Friday past the 10th you and I were at your dads surprise 40th Birthday party in a place called Spice in Erskine Lane Broughty Ferry. We had a great night the music was good and the food was excellent. I took a lot of Photographs and hopefully you will be able to look at these in the future and remember me.

About this time one of the great pastimes was walking up and down the Overgate now some people say the walk was down the Overgate and then along the Murraygate but in my day it was just up and down the Overgate. Sunday was a great night we went into the Palais, there was Music but no dancing all you did was walk around the Dance Floor, to let you understand the Dance Floor was covered with tables and chairs, and you walked around the hall, and listened to Andy Lothians band and singer, his name was Charlie Coates they played and sung all the hits of the day. After a while you went to sit down and watch the girls, if you were interested in anyone you waited until they went to pass you, then joined them walking around, many kids met their life partners in this fashion. Then it was outside and start the walk up and down the Overgate, it maybe sounds quite tame now but in our day it was fantastic.

Although this is my story I think it is important to mention tings that were on the go when I was growing up Tramcars, School Potato Picking, Half Holiday Football, the Fifies (Tay Ferrys) Buster Stalls, Street Games, Hucky Duck, Chicky Melly, Hide& Seek, Kick The Can. Community Centres, Sasses, Penny Fantas, Sweets, Onion Johnnys. I'm trying to remember a lot of these things so I need prompts



Tramcars, we took them for granted they were there part of the Dundee scenery. but I had a connection, James my brother was a Conductor and also a Driver of the Trams as they were known back then. A wee story, James liked a drink, and one New Year he had been up drinking all night and had to work in the morning, on the journey up to Downfield he fell asleep. Did he get robbed when he was sleeping! no, the passengers collected the fares, he slept all the way to Downfield and back down the town again and there was always somebody taking the fares and issuing tickets, nowadays they would have emptied his bag and his wallet too. Believe it or not, the world was a different place in those days, there were problems of course, but they were few and far between, people left their doors open, and felt quite safe. This was in the days when the local Burglar would travel a good distance to do his thing, but now, they think nothing about burgling their next-door neighbour.

Potato Picking at School, 1953 about September October time the Secondary schools closed to allow the pupils to help with the harvesting of potatoes. It was great you got off the school for about two weeks, you turned up at the school about 7-30am boarded buses and away to pick tatties all day, it was very hard back breaking work, but nobody complained, we were off school and out in the country, you got an area measured off marked off called a 'bit' usually about six yards, the Digger then came around dug up your bit and you had to pick your "bit" pretty quick, this was repeated all day you had a tea break in the morning.(the Farm workers called it a(Midser) then you were bussed to village school dining halls for your dinner this lasted one Hour back to the field another Midser in the afternoon, then you were taken back to the school and found your own way home there wasn't a lot of Mums and Dads had cars in those days.

One morning I was late and the only Bus left was from the girls school and I was put on that, it was great I don't think I picked a potato all day the girls were all fighting to get me picking next to them. The only embarrassing thing all day was when we went for our dinner here was me turning up at a dining hall on a bus full of girls and there was already a bus there full of boys I got a big cheer but they were all jealous. I was a hero in the school for a few days and met a lot of new girlfriends. By the way you were paid Seven Shillings and Sixpence a week, the equivalent of about 37 ½ pence in today's money.



Half Holiday Football, this was an organised league primarily set up for shop assistants and people working shifts who couldn't get off at the weekend. I played for the Post-Office they were a no bad side and we managed to get to the Final of the Scottish Postal Cup we played that at Aberdeen and were unfortunately beaten 1-0 by a team from Glasgow. The games were played on Wednesday afternoons and I remember playing in a semi-final of a cup in the afternoon at Fairmuir Park and playing in a cup final the same night won the semi, lost the final I got the man of the Match in the final.

The Final in the evening was played at Dawson Park and was an Angus Amateurs game, I was Playing for Dundee Utd. Social Club against the Gillburn Rangers, they were beating everyone 16 and 18-0 in their games, we had played them in the league and been the only team to beat them in about two years, anyhow we were beating them 2-0 when Kenny Ower got kicked in the face and had to go to Hospital, that was us down to 10 men (no subs in those days) that was the turning point and we eventually lost 3-2 but it was a great game.



During the 1950's the Fifies also known as the Tay ferries, this was a great treat something to look forward to a trip on the Fifie , they berthed where the Discovery Point is now. They took cars, Lorries and passengers; its route took you downriver to right where the Road Bridge is now, then came back up the river to Newport. in fact during the building of the Bridge one of the Fifies crashed into the uncompleted Bridge. Going back in my story a bit,

I've just had a thought when my mum took us over to fife to escape the bombs “ did we go on the Train or the Fifie, either way it must have crossed her mind that we were at War, and German Airplanes had tried to bomb the rail bridge, so the Train or the Fifie might have been a tempting target in those days. Nowadays I go to the Fairmuir Club to play Pool and there's a guy called Dougie Banks who worked on the Fifies as a Deckhand. The names of the ferries were the Abercraig and the Scotsraig another connection for you is that your Granny Mags father was on the building of both Boats; he was a great character. Doug Farquhar worked in the Boatyard for Forty nine Years as a Plater this was a trade and he would have had to spend approx. 5 years as an apprentice.

About this time Dundee had what was called Buster Stalls the two I remember were, one in Thorter Row which was off the old Overgate and was run by a Mrs Feeney, the granny of one of my pals, I was later to meet, when we moved to Linlathen. The other was near the top of the Overgate situated on a piece of ground where a Saturday Market was held. These Buster stalls were just a tent, they had big Braziers fuelled by a type of coal called Coke (nothing to do with Coca Cola) you at Five years old are as sharp as a tack so I can just imagine you saying something about fires and Coke i.e. “ my Granddad's a numpty. “ Anyhow the Coke was stacked all around the inside of the tent, and there were planks of wood on top of the Coke and this is what you sat on.

You ordered your Buster and got it in a saucer or a bowl, basic ingredients were chips and peas it was served with the liquid from the peas it was absolutely brilliant and I have never tasted a buster as good since those days. The Hygiene must have been awful at that time but we weren't as particular in those days. I can't mention Busters without mentioning the Sass (Sarsaparilla) this was a drink sold in two places that I can remember, one was in the Hilltown called the Temperance Tavern and the other was in a shop called Greenhills in the Overgate. It was basically a drink made up on the premises there were all different types of flavours, there was raspberry, lime, mint, orange, and for some reason one, the real sarsaparilla was for adults so it was a great treat to get one of these, they must have been more expensive, I don't know.

There is one incident I must mention regarding going on holiday to the berries; this was about 1950. The family we always went with was the aforementioned Uncle Terry and Auntie Dovie (Davina). Now they had a family of 10 and at this time lived in Long Lane in Broughty Ferry, Terry was a taxi driver and at that time all the taxis were big cars so him and his wife and 8 of the kids would get taken over in the car. But the oldest boys Terry and Ronnie they had to walk, now I don't know the distance, but they had a big pram and this was filled to capacity with foodstuffs and various other things that they couldn't get into the car. So Terry and Ronnie would set off from Long Lane and push this pram to the Fifie at the docks at the bottom of Union Street, get on board the Fifie get off on the other side of the river at Newport, then have to walk to Cupar (try this in a car one day it's a hell of a distance).

They had a certain time to get there, and there was a good chance of a belting if they were late. I have since driven along this route and can only imagine how awful this must have been for these lads, at this time they would only be thirteen or fourteen I often think at times in my life I had it pretty hard but any complaints I have pale into insignificance compared to what they had to put up with.

Because everybody has cars nowadays this story may not have the same impact, but in 1952 to about 1953, when we were living in Linlathen there were very few cars and to get offered a hurl in a car was a great occasion and something to really get excited about. Anyhow my Uncle George O'Rourke came to visit us one day and asked me if I'd like a hurl in his van, I jumped at the chance and away we went, it didn't matter that as we were driving along the road I could see the road going past under my feet , it was a wooden floor and some of the spars were missing in these days of M.O T s you would not believe the state of some of the vehicles that were on the road.

Anyhow we didn't travel very far just up the road to a new housing scheme called Fintry, anyhow he parked at the side of the road, got out, and started shouting at the top of his voice, "Sticks for kindling your fire and Mugs for your tea." This resulted in a lot of women coming onto their balconies and putting in their order "two mugs and a bunch of kindlen" that was when I found out my part in the plan, I got the job of running up the stairs with the order we must have been out a few hours and it was hard work and I don't think I got paid. I never fell for that again. He had about 8 of a family and their Holidays were camping in tents.

He invited us on a couple of occasions and it was always outside Kirriemuir in a field. The tent the adults slept in was ex army very large and I can remember it having a wooden floor (Luxury) we were in smaller tents and not the modern things you will see. This time I was in with the boys all a lot older than me, one morning woke up to young George saying something was tickling him under his arm, lifted his arm and what looked to me at the time was a giant black spider. I must have been shocked, and a bit scared, they all started laughing George had caught the spider and placed it under his arm. If he hadn't come clean there was no way I was going back camping. Every Saturday there was a dance in the Church Hall. The first time I was there this older lady came over and asked me to dance, that was me hooked on dancing loved it.

I must tell you about my brother James, as I've said before, he was born to a different father, this never ever bothered Andy and me, to us, he was our big brother, and I have never ever related to him in any other way, but it did bother him, and he once said to me that he was always jealous of us because he felt like an outsider. But what he didn't understand is we were jealous of him because he was always my Mums favourite, and it wasn't until we were older that we realised that Mum tried to give him that bit extra to make up to him.

It was a stigma in these days to be Illegitimate, and he was very aware of his circumstances, but my Dad never ever made any difference between him and us. He was born in 1928 so was 12 years older than me and 8 years older than Andy so we were kids, and he was a bit older, it stands to reason, he would feel out of it, when we were doing things, that he would be too old for. When we moved to Catherine Street James would have been 17 and working in the Oddfellows Bar on the site of Granny Mags Parents house. He worked in the cellar bottling beer and spirits. All public Houses bottled and labelled their beer and spirits in those days.

Couple of incidents with James. In our house it was taboo to swear in the company of our Mum. Anyhow can't remember what it was about, but I'm assuming it had something to do with somebody using either the drying green or the wash house out of turn. Words must have been exchanged between Dougie Proctors Mum and ours, anyhow Dougie decided to get involved and was screaming, shouting and swearing at Mum. James came home from work, Mum was upset so he enquired as to what had happened, he immediately went to the Proctors door. The upshot was I can remember it was Dougie who asked James to go around the backs. We had never seen James angry before, but suffice to say after the fight Dougie was at our door apologising. Another lesson learnt don't get on James wrong side.

The next thing I remember he was off to do his National Service in the R.A.F. 1946. I also remember a bit of excitement in the family when it was announced that Master Jo Peterson was to be performing on the Caird Hall. Now to explain, she was the sister of James's real father her name was Mary O'Rourke, and she was in those days an International Star Performing all over. By the time we moved to Kirkton James was 22 years old had been demobbed and was back working in the Bar trade this time in the Albert Bar in Albert Street. Then he met his wife Sheena her name was Millar and they have three of a family, Jimmy, Sheena, and Dennis.

The other incident involving James. We were well warned if you got into bother, you could not run to any of your brothers for help. But this time I was about 14 and sledging beside the bridge at Fintry/Linlathen when this guy, appeared with some of his mates, tried to take sledge away from me and I struggled a bit, now this guy was about 19 or twenty years old I was 14. He belted me and I had to go home with my nose bleeding pretty badly. Unknown to me James was visiting, saw the blood and demanded to know what had happened, on telling him that a guy about 6 years older than me had hit me, he had me take him back to the place of the incident. I remember hoping the guy had had the sense to leave, but no he was still there. I've no intention of going into details but sufficient to say the guy was full of apologies after

He then went to work for a lot of years with Dryden's fruit and Veg and Frozen food as a van driver and later Foreman. He fell off a box helping to load a lorry and broke his leg and ankle in a few places, His Boss visited him in Hospital, James is lying in bed his leg in traction unable to move.

The Boss said it was his fault, and he got his cards on the spot, fancy being allowed to pay somebody off for having an accident at their work, unbelievable but these things happened in those days, some Employers and conditions were terrible. He then went to work for Dundee City Council as City Chambers Caretaker was there a lot of years then moved down to Northampton City Council as Town Hall Keeper he was there a long time and died there in 1988 at the age of 60. His family still live in Northampton, none of them have any family.

Your granny must have been about 19 when we were married, and as I have said before your great Granny and Granda Tyrrell didn't think a lot of me and Granny Pat was told if she wanted to continue seeing me she would have to leave the house. So she had to go and live with her sister Rose and husband Jim, in Harrison Road. So imagine I had to walk home, sometimes at one am, through Ardler, Kirkton, Caird Park, Den O'Mains, where if you were aware of someone coming in the opposite direction, you would start to whistle and they would do the same if they heard you first, down to the well opposite the castle for a drink and then home to Linlathen.

Now to let you understand although Jim agreed to take her in and he was probably the biggest miser you could ever hope to meet; because he had a job he was well liked. He would ask you to go for a pint then get out of buying his round, he once asked Granny Tyrrell if she would like a run over to Fife to see another Daughter Mary. Now nobody in those days had a car so as I've said before to get offered a run was great stuff. So the answer was a definite yes, his reply was okay we'll meet you at the Fifie so they met at the Fifie,

It was still going to be a great run to outside Cupar in Fife. The car was left outside the Fifie Buildings and they got on to the Fifie then had to get a bus from Newport to Cupar. How miserable could you get he wouldn't go and pick them up in Linlathen, said the Fifie was too expensive to take his car on, and she also had to pay her own Bus fare to Cupar. Now he also thought nothing of taking his kid and your mum over to the shops and buy him sweets while your mum got nothing, I finished up going ballistic with him over that incident. And he was well thought of in the family because he had a good paying job with N.C.R.

Anyhow she didn't stay there long because one morning she was short of about 3 old Pennies for her Bus to her work in Keillers in Mains Loan, he refused to give her a loan of the money and she had to walk to her work from Harrison Road to Mains Loan a distance of about 4 or 5 miles. This was 1957

She then moved in with my Mum, and me. About this time Granny Pat's dad died of Asian Flu. I didn't realise it at the time but she must have been traumatised, threw out of the house, her dad dying , this in the space of a few months. We then got married, and

lived with Mum about 4 or 5 months. We then got a house at 11 East Hendersons Wynd at the West Port, it would be classed now as a flat but in those days it was called a house. I joined the Army but wasn't in very long a matter of about Six weeks, when I came home it was found that Granny Pat had Tuberculosis and was in Ashludie Hospital for about Four Months.

It must have been awful at the time, to have been only 20 years old and be in hospital all that time. I tried to go and live with My Mum again but Dad was back and he had all his rules and regulations and I must have considered myself married and too old to be told what to do, so I finished up living on my own. I don't think I was very good at it, couldn't get up for my work in the morning, and I think I really struggled. The British Legion got me a job as a porter in the Dundee Royal Infirmary it was only seasonal so I wasn't there very long.

A porter in the D.R.I. what a job! You worked three shifts early late and nights, the early shift was pretty straightforward you were busy with clinics. The late shift could get a bit more exciting, for a start there was the drunks and casualties and even in those days there were nurses and doctors being assaulted, I remember once a man had come in drunk with an eye injury and while the nurse was trying to clean him up, he head butted her. 1958, Justice was swift. On this occasion the man was admitted so I had to take him up to the ward under Police supervision. As soon as the lift door closed, I was told to face the doors and not to turn around for anything, if he wasn't needing hospital treatment before, he was certainly needing it after they were finished.

Then we were kept busy with the Maternity Unit. In those days the father only got in to see his wife and baby at visiting hour, so you got these young men going out and having a good drink to(Wet the Bairns Head) and end up wanting to see the wife and baby, they would then try to sneak in, that was when we were called in to escort them off the premises very few of them went quietly.

Then there was the night shift the Casualty Dept. was really busy, and another of our duties was looking after Patients that came in from Liff and Strathmartine Mental Health Hospitals, these were called specials and you had to sit with them all night, getting relieved for breaks. On one occasion I had been with this Patient all night and Alec Smith was giving me my breaks, now, I sat facing the Patient reading my book or paper, and every time I came back Alec was sitting with his back to the bed, the last break, about 5am I came back, and Alec got up to give me my seat I was so tired I just sat down with my back to the Patient my bum hadn't touched the seat when I was grabbed from behind by the collar and pulled into the bed, it's a good job Alec was still there because I was being throttled, we eventually got me released and I had completely lost the nut, I closed my fist and Alec grabbed me (ye canna hit a patient) he said and calmed me down. The next thing we knew the patient had grabbed Alec and bit his hand, Alec was screaming, and punched the Patient in the nose to get him to let go, so much for no hitting a Patient, it eventually took six of us to subdue him long enough for a Doctor to sedate him (the Patient Not Alec).

Another part of our job was Mortuary work. The porters were responsible for taking bodies from the wards to the mortuary. There were two types of porter at that time there were uniformed porters who were the Supervisors and Bosses. The uniformed porters assisted with the Post Mortems and we were sometimes sent to help them this only happened to me once and I hated it.

Now and again we had to respond to reports of prowlers: one at the nurses' residences and another inside the hospital. One particular case a call came in to the front door a report of someone was in the ground of the nurses' residences. Myself and another porter, searched the grounds and, lo and behold, who did we find? Two policemen! sitting behind a bush. Their explanation was: they were looking for prowlers.

Another case involved being called out to the telephonist in her office. She said that someone was outside her office and would I investigate as she was frightened. So, away I went to her office to have a look and found another porter who was obviously trying to get in to her office. I told him to report to the front office and this resulted in an investigation. The thing that surprised me most was that this was the same guy I have talked about previously at the boxing where he gave me a hammering. How is that for coincidence.

When I left DRI, as it was a seasonal job, I got a place as a porter in Hunter's Store in the old Wellgate. During my time there I got on the bus with the same guy every morning and we were always late by 5 minutes. He was promoted to supervisor, imagine my surprise when I got on the same bus and no sign of him. I arrived at work to find him standing waiting on me and gave me a warning about my time keeping!

Another incident in Hunter's, they had a clothing department and I had spied an overcoat that I was keen on. I approached the man in charge of that department and enquired about paying something toward the coat weekly. Obviously the coat remained on the premises until paid in full. One day I got a call from Granny Pat saying that the police were searching the house looking for an overcoat that had went missing from Hunter's. It turned out that the guy in charge of the clothing department had given the coat to a professional football player. He had tried to cover this up by accusing me of stealing the coat.

Another similar incident much later in life, while working Strathmore Springs; this was in the mid seventies. I had made a delivery to a licensed premises shop on the corner of Albert street and Park Avenue. The shopkeeper, a woman, enquired regarding the price of 6 bottles of cider. I did not know offhand so she asked me to call the depot from the phone in the back shop. I informed her of the price and then went back to my deliveries. That evening we were preparing to go on holiday to England in a motor home which we had hired for the trip. About nine-thirty pm, there was a loud knock at the door. Two men identified themselves as Dundee detectives and informed me they had a search warrant for the house and car.

It transpired that then shop keeper had reported the loss of a three figure sum of money and valuable documents. After the search, nothing was found and I said to Granny Mags that we should cancel the holiday as I was too upset to go; I intended to go to the police station the next morning. There I spoke to an Inspector who assured me that I should go on holiday and enjoy myself. The upshot was that the owners were charged with fraud. They were in financial difficulties and had decided to form this plan for insurance purposes. I enjoyed the holiday.

One incident in 1958 I do remember is that when we were in East Hendersons Wynd, I had been to a smoker and got drunk, George Ormond was with me and he dropped a bottle on the ground and it broke, this was witnessed by two Bobbies, and they told George to pick it up, he refused, and was promptly arrested for Breach of the Peace and the Litter Act. I then interfered, and was also arrested, and charged with Breach of the Peace.

When I didn't come home your Granny Pat started to get worried , and went through to the next door Neighbour. He told her not to worry I was probably drunk and in the Jail. Nobody had a phone in those days so Granny Pat and the man next door walked up to the Police Station and he was spot on. I was fined £3. George was fined £3 For Breach of the peace and £2 for the litter act.

Writing about these fines reminds me of a couple of incidents in the 1930's, my Dad told me about when he was young. The first one was when he was about 15 years old he found a dog and took it home and was fined 2 Shillings (10p) and another incident when he played the drums in the Progress Dance Hall in the Hilltown, he had to double as a bouncer, so one night there was a fight, and in trying to get one guy out the door, he found himself fighting out in the street, he was arrested, and fined 5 shillings (25p) for fighting in the street.

I seem to be using the word incident a lot but this is a good way of describing things that happened over the years, anyhow this incident happened in East Henderson's Wynd. This was around 1958 and I must first try to describe the layout of the flat. As you opened the front door this led on to a small hall on your left was a cupboard that the previous tenants had put the Gas Cooker into, then directly opposite was the bedroom door and to the right of that the door leading to the living room. So try to imagine the situation I'm sitting in the living room reading my paper and Granny Pat is in the lobby as we would call a hall in those days.

I heard her saying, "Cut it out I'm trying to cook."

So I shouted back, "What do you mean? I'm reading my paper."

She then, having realised I was still in the living room, came into the room as white as a sheet, clearly upset. I immediately asked her what was wrong.

"Did you just grab me around the waist out there?" she said.

I replied, "No I've been reading my paper."

She then realised I would not have had time to get back to my seat after grabbing her. So unless she has changed her mind in these last few years, she was convinced that she had a spiritual experience. Scary stuff, but I can testify to her being deathly pale when she walked into the room.

When we were in East Hendersons Wynd we had a dog, a wee mongrel called Chico, I think we got the name from a coffee jar. I don't know why we would want a dog living in

a tenement three stairs up. What I can remember about him he was a wee cracker. The reason I'm mentioning this dog is there has been 2 or 3 dogs that I will mention in the course of this story. Another thing I must mention about this house was, we were back to living without a bathroom, the toilet was outside but we didn't have to share with anyone. The toilet, which was right outside our door, was L shaped, when you went in the door you walked about 2 yards, then turned right, and walked another 2 yards to get to the W.C. I had to light the candle then stand outside the door when your granny Pat had to go at night. And that was us back to bathing in front of the fire in the Living Room.

I can't remember a lot happening in East Henderson's Wynd But a couple of things spring to mind. Firstly when I finished with D.R.I. Mr Robertson of Lindsay & Robertson visited me and asked me to come back as Store man, he offered me a no bad wage so I found myself back where my working life had started, it felt strange going back I had been the boy, in there and now I was the man in charge of the boy. It wasn't long before I was away working in the Building trade as a labourer again. The second thing I remember, as I Have said earlier Granny Pat was in Hospital a long time, so I lived there on my own for about 4 months.

As I've said before I loved Country & Western Music as it was known as in those days (they dropped the & Western in the Eighties) so its only known now as Country Music. This type of music was hard to come by in the Fifties, and in order to hear the latest from America, I had to tune into the American Forces Network coming from Germany, this entailed either setting your alarm for 4am or just staying up I was stupid and used to stay up all night in order to hear that programme, no wonder I couldn't get up for my work in the morning. If you didn't have a trade in those days it didn't seem to matter that you were losing jobs because you just walked into another one. As I'm writing this its difficult to believe I was like that, and I'm now quite ashamed of myself, the way I carried on I'm surprised Granny Pat stayed with me as long as she did.

One good thing about living there was you were right in the middle of everything; you could walk any place in the town within minutes. I remember my very first Record Player I bought it on Hire Purchase from a shop where Littlewoods is standing today. I can't remember what the payments were, but I do remember I only paid a few of the payments then stopped. They wrote to me but I obviously couldn't afford the payments, then after a while I never heard anymore from them, so black mark against your Grandda. By the way the outline of East Henderson's Wynd is still there but the buildings are long gone

Because Granny Pat had been in hospital with Tuberculosis we qualified for a better house on Medical grounds. So we were given the keys of 53 Findchapel Place in Fintry in 1959. I remember well the day we went to see it, we were accompanied by my favourite Aunty Sarah O'Rourke (you always took someone older than you so they could tell you whether there was any damp or bugs) and I remember starting at the bottom of the street looking for 53, imagine our surprise and delight to find out it was a three roomed semi detached with our own garden, and it was stone built not like the majority of the houses in the street which were of a wooden construction.

This was like going back in time to when I left Catherine Street, although we had our own W.C. in East Hendersons Wynd we had no bath, so here we were getting a new modern house with a bathroom. It was absolutely freezing there was one fireplace for the whole house when you went to bed it was like going to the Antarctic. I remember putting a false ceiling in the stairwell to try and combat the cold. I think we tried a variety of heaters all over the house but it remained a really cold place to be in the winter. But me your Mum and Granny Pat spent a lot of happy years there.

You did not have to go far for any "messages" because, right at the door, there always appeared: the vegetable and fruit seller, ice cream vans, Johnstone Stores, Peter Marr's grocery van, coal lorries, lemonade lorries and Humes grocery van, too. I can assure you health and safety went out the window. The veg man had a cigarette dangling from his mouth most of the time. There was no hand washing facilities or sanitisers in those days.

Along came 1961 two things happened to us that year, the most important being that your Mum was born on the 31/01/61. And we got our first T.V. we couldn't afford to buy one but we managed to rent one from Visionhire. We had been married 4 years and wondered if we would ever have a family. Granny Pat went to bed one day feeling very ill she felt so bad I called the doctor in, imagine our delight when the Doc. said you're pregnant, we were jumping for joy.

The night your Mum was born I Phoned the Hospital at 11.45 and was told there was no change and not to phone again, until morning, so I lay awake all night worrying myself sick only to be told when I phoned in the morning, that Granny Pat had given birth to a beautiful daughter at 11.55 the night before. 10 minutes after I had Phoned. Hospital Sisters were a hard lot in these days.

Maternity Hospitals in those days were terrible as far as the Fathers were concerned. You only got in for an hour at visiting time, and I only got to see your Mum for a matter of minutes. The charge nurses, known as Sister in those days, ran the Ward like an army barracks; their word was law and it was a brave father that went up against them.

Your Dad has been very hands on since you were born but back in the early sixties it wasn't like that at all. I don't know the answer to that, but Fathers didn't change nappies or bath their children. And you now feel that you missed out on a lot of your Childs early life.

I've never heard your mum complain about her early life, being an only child meant she was spoilt and we tended to try and give her more in life than we had got. It's safe to say that she was spoilt but always well brought up and quite mannerable, had a temper, and was frightened of nothing. This was displayed on a few occasions once she said a boy was bothering her and would I go with her to see his Father, and get it stopped, when we got to his house she set about the boy and had to be dragged off.

Another time we came home from the Cinema and there was a man standing at our back door, before I could get out of the car she had the guy pinned up against the wall, she was fifteen at the time. Going back in time we should have seen it all coming, 3 Yr old and going to Granny Pats Aunt who Baby sat for other people. She had warned us about a boy who was very quick to lift his hands. So we told your mum if he hit her she was to close her fist and punch him on the nose, what does your Mum do! Walks in the door and before anybody could do anything, she punched him in the face, he hadn't looked at her. When she was about 8 or 9 she was fighting in the street with a boy two years older than her, James Murray, and his Dad had to come out and rescue him. My Mum was the same: 5ft nothing and nothing scared her.

Your Mum was 3 Yrs old when I passed my driving test, two days later and I had bought my first car a big Austin A55 which cost me all of £25. It is still the only car I made a profit on when I sold it I got £50, amazing.

I drove down to Crewe with this car with Granny Pat and Great Granny Ina. We got as far as Knutsford Services just outside Crewe. I was very sick because, unknown to me, the Shockers on the car had packed in. So, this left the vehicle bobbing up and down and me suffering from, the want of a better word, seasickness.

My two cousins, Bob and Billy Winton, came out to rescue us. The next day, Billy, who was a motor mechanic, gave me his car, a Rover 2000, to run about with and he took my car in to his work to try and fix it. The upshot was he replaced the shockers and swapped my engine for the engine out of a 9 month old Austin A55 van. How could you possibly get away with that nowadays. A different time.

I failed my Driving test twice before passing and at that time I'm sure it made me a better driver and less likely to take a chance and drink drive and lose something that had been very difficult to achieve. But in saying I am a good driver I've had a couple of bumps, not always my fault. It's hard to blame anybody else when it's you that's driving. Your Mum asked me to allow her to learn to drive in my car I said okay, she drove 25yards and hit a parked car and tried to blame it on the other guy, who at the time was watching T.V. she claimed he was wrong parking it outside his door.

In the late sixties, 1967 to be precise, I took up Darts, started playing in my local the Powrie Bar. I had bought a set of darts and they had very long set of stems on them. I wasn't even average, couldn't win two games in a row. One Saturday a man called Jimmy Laing who was at the time the best dart player in Dundee, asked me for a loan of my darts, after a few games he said that I should go and buy a set of short stems and different flights, I did and the very first day I played with them I started to play really well, and by the end of the first week it was getting very difficult to beat me, I was all of a sudden winning a lot more games than I was losing. I was then approached about signing for the team and was Dundee Singles Champion within Six months.

We played that Final in what was then the Dundee Labour club. The man I played in the final was Eddie McKenzie. I won the first leg Eddie made it ones up, in these days you played best of three legs starting with a double, I got nearest the bull and started the third and final leg with double 15 then two trebles twenties a score of 150 leaving 151 I took only 4 darts then to finish the game. But it wasn't that easy, I was playing one of the best players in the league, and had only been playing for 6 months. So I knew that I had to finish this quick, although I'd had a great start, he was quite capable of coming back at me, then enters into the story a guy called Jackie McBride. Jackie, although older than me was a good friend, and drinking buddy.

I was conscious of standing there looking at this double 16 and running through my mind was if I hit this I'm the Champion of Dundee, I must have stood there quite a while, and Jackie must have realised, there was a good chance I was going to put myself off, instead of just getting on with it, anyhow out of the reverie came his voice, (come on take a good look at it and hit it). I was Dundee Licensed Singles Champion. There were at that time 3 leagues of 15 teams with 12 men in every team so it was quite an achievement for someone only playing for six months. Eddie McKenzie became a very good pal and we stayed friends until his early death in his late thirties. Jackie finished his days in sheltered housing in a wheelchair after suffering a bad Stroke, he died in 2003, and I was honoured to be asked by his family to take a cord at his Burial.

Out I went on the Friday nights to play in what was at that time the best league in the Town, the Dundee Clubs League. At that time known as the Friday league. Turned up full of biz I was going to show everybody how good I was, The first thing that happened to me that night was I got dropped, we were back in the Labour club and Stuart Liddle thought it was too much to ask me to play and win in what was a big game. He wanted to give me time to settle down and get over the Euphoria of winning the singles. Then came my introduction to the bad side of darts. Now I hope I don't sound like I'm making excuses for myself, but this early introduction into envy, jealousy and violence left me with a tendency to face up to all the intimidation I was to see in the coming years; I met it head on. Anyhow to get back to the story, enter a dart player, who will remain unnamed, as soon as he heard I was dropped, according to him not to give me a break, but the fact was I wasn't good enough, to get my place, in what was at the time the best team in Dundee. Now Unknown to me this was a ploy to get me involved in playing for money, something I had never done before.

So after a lot of winding me up (and I was easy wound up) He challenged me to play for 10 shillings (50 pence) but a lot of money in those days. After playing and beating him and two or three of his pals, in walked the money player a guy called Wattie Hume , he had a reputation at the time of being a good money player, The very last game of the night , I haven't lost a game and were playing for £20 a fortune in those days, I'm on Double 10 to win the money and Wattie hasn't hit his starting double yet, at that moment my pal at the time Jock Riddell said to me come on Millar just finish it and tak yer money. Norrie Morrison jumped up and told Jock to shut up or he would shut him up, obviously upset that his plan of belittling me had gone wrong, Jock hit him, I hit the Double, and your Granny Pat went down the town the next day with about £50 in her

purse. An awful lot of money in these days. This Jamie was the first of many incidents I had to face up to because I was better than average.

I then progressed to the final of the Dundee Darts Association Singles Championship, then known as the Friday League. It was a very close game against an excellent player which I came out on top with a score of two to one. I can't remember the score offhand, but I know it was a big finish. I then proceeded to shake hands with the player and say, "Great game." His reply, at the time was, "You are maybe a good dart player, but as a fighter you are useless; me and you outside." This was the type of thing that continued throughout my career.

Let me tell you of some of the things people tried just to maybe upset me, and have a better chance of beating me. I'm playing in a league game in the Lea Rig Bar in Douglas, (circa 1970) it's important to let you know that my team had no chance of winning the league, or even being runners up, at this time 6 players played 3 legs and all the legs counted and they were winning 8 to 7 so all one of the Lea Rigg players had to do was win one leg and they would be runners up in the league. The rules permitted the player to ask the marker what was left, this was usually done near the end of the leg (for instance he is on 105 and hits treble 5 and asks what does that leave me, the marker would reply 90, if you left 32 he could not say double 16.

Anyhow it's 301 double to start and a double to finish, he hits a double right away and asks the marker what does that leave me, he then stopped the game after every throw, to ask what he was left, this was unheard of in darts. Well me being me I asked him to stop the nonsense and get on with the game, and I said to him that he was a good enough player to beat me fair and square. This had no effect on him and the next leg he started to do the same again, I then informed him and his team and supporters that he now had no chance of beating me and that the Commercial Bar would be runners up, I beat him 3 to 0 and got chased out of the Pub.

They were trying to turn the car I was in over but we managed to get away. The following week I'm playing in the singles competition in the Balmoral Bar (my Home Pub) I can't remember his name but the first player I played hit a double and asked the marker what was left obviously trying to upset me. I'm sorry but my reaction was to put my darts on the shelf and told him if he asked again I would belt him in the mouth (no swear words allowed) he stopped the nonsense and I beat him, it must have been 2 to 0.

Players used to walk back from the board right up to me then step to the side at the last minute. They sometimes done this at a crawl trying to upset me, they dropped things at my back just as I was about to throw, would say my foot was over the line (this was before the use of raised oches we used a Rubber mat).

While playing for £100 I was hit from behind by a wooden bench, still won. In the Semi Final of the Dundee singles I was on my favourite double 10, to win the match, and somebody put all the lights out in the room. Another player hit his starting double then left the board to order a drink, threw his second dart then went to pay for it took ages to come back and throw his 3rd dart. I could go on and on but it was dawning on me that all

this nonsense was because I was a lot better than any other player in Dundee. I was Dundee singles Champion 6 times Appeared in the final 4 years on the trot, was Tayside Champion of Champions 3 times, this was an area covering all of Perthshire Angus Dundee Arbroath Montrose and part of Fife, not a bad achievement. I then won the Tayside Open 3 times. What I did notice was this behaviour was confined to Dundee, I never had a bit of bother any place else.

I was Runner-up in the Scottish Singles, played in Kirkintulloch a place your papa and granny Josie knew well. I was Scottish Nodor Champion this was in a fours competition, I had a big following in all the places I played except Dundee, but it now transpires, when I meet a lot of the guys that were playing at the time they had nothing against me except I was the better player.

There was a guy who tried to stitch me up on quite a lot of occasions, an official. He tried to get me to sign for his team the Civil Service, and he was at the time President of the biggest league in the town the Dundee Darts Association. He also became Vice Chairman of the Scottish Darts Association, to all intents and purposes a very important man in Darts, and boy did he let me know. It was a straight forward case of if I signed for him I would go far, but I stuck to my pals at the time. It started with a phone call at about 11pm on a Saturday night. And his words were that he had great news for me.

I had been picked to play in a Scottish trial and I had to appear at 10am the next morning, in the Tartan Club in Edinburgh, he was sorry it was such short notice but he hoped I could get there. A friend of mine Graeme Stewart agreed to drive me through. When we got there a member of the Civil Service team Lindsay Chrichton was already in the hall, and I remarked that we had't been given a lot of notice, he informed us that he had known for six weeks him and I were to be playing . In order to play your best in a trial as important as that you had to prepare properly and I was given no time at all but was determined to play well and show him that I didn't need his help. At the time it was sufficient to win your matches to get into the Scottish Team and it would have been a great honour to be picked for Scotland. Anyhow the draw had been made previously and I was to face 3 Full blown Scottish Internationals, can't remember their first names but I beat the first one very easily. The next up, was a guy, I beat very easily, then came a lad who was to be a future World Champion Jocky Wilson. I also beat him 2-1, the aforementioned official, was on the selection board, and out of 24 players I was not placed in the top 20. I went on to play well in several Scottish Trials and I was only beaten once, but was never ever selected, he saw to that.

It is without doubt my biggest regret that I never got to play for my country and had to watch players who were not as good, wear that very special shirt. If it had not been for a certain official, I would have had the proud honour to be the first ever Dundee darts player to play for Scotland. This at the time would have put Dundee darts on the map.

How can someone not be good enough to play for Scotland, but get selected to play for Great Britain against Wales in their Centenary. But once again I was not allowed to play, threatened with a total ban from Darts, because the Scottish select board had not picked me. Granny Mags and I qualified to play in the Scottish finals of the Kensitas Triples,

Graeme Stewart was our third player, we, along with the other team were practising at the board.

Now to let you understand you needed an official marker and checker before a game could progress, we had neither. The same player that wanted to fight me after beating him in the final of the Dundee Friday Singles Championship, while practising threw 140 stopped, and said to us that this was his first score, there was of course a hue and cry and the Scottish official running the competition at the time was called over to sort it out. We pointed out the fact, that there was no marker or checker in place, and that we had not even tossed a coin to see who would go first. The official verdict was that the score would stand and the game should commence (who was the official, none other than the same guy) needless to say we were all upset and had lost interest we were beaten and decided to return home.

We headed for the Balmoral Bar in the Hilltown and arrived there at about 9.15pm. Next thing I knew I was summoned to appear in front of a disciplinary committee of the Dundee Darts Association; the charge was that I had been asked to help a Mr Tom Frost to take down the dart boards at the end of the competition, I was supposed to have told him to get stuffed. This was supposed to have happened at 11pm. And as I have already stated I was in Dundee at 9.15pm. The charges were dropped but this was all to do with getting me a reputation as a trouble maker.

Then came Scottish Television, everybody on that show was an active Scottish International, except me. I was billed as the Scottish all Individual Champion. At the time I believe I had appeared in more Competition finals than anyone else and through a points system was named as Champion. Anyhow, the same guy, was there officiating, I'll never forget it, I had hit a decent shot and was well in front had a quick look at the board and saw I had left 80 a quite easy finish for me at the time and Eddie McArthur was on 152 to my surprise Eddie hit Treble twenty Treble twenty Double Sixteen game shot (what a great finish under a lot of pressure and on T.V.).

We shook hands and also put our arms around one and other, walked off the stage. The Producer approached us and said they hadn't got the hand shake and could we do it again, up we went to a lot of joking and kidding. You've guessed it I was back in front of the Dundee Darts Assoc. on a charge of bringing the game into disrepute; I had refused to shake hands and had to be forced to go back on the stage by the Producer. Again the charges were dropped after I threatened to go to a solicitor and the intervention of Mr Cook, at the time the Scottish Darts Association secretary, but things stick, as was the plan.

Grampian Television, I received a phone call from a Presenter on Grampian Frank Gilfeather, asking me if I had given up darts, it transpired that in looking for the best dart players (2) in Dundee to go on T.V. in a competition, my name had not come forward from the same official mentioned above, so Frank had phoned me to find out what was going on, I explained my relationship with this official, Frank told me to hang up and that I would get a call shortly. A short while later on comes the official, he had great news for me "he" had selected me to go on Grampian Television. It is with great pride that I am writing to you now in the knowledge that I won that Competition. And what a kick in the teeth that must have been for him, and once again it was all Full Scottish Internationals that I beat. It was also about this time I met Granny Mags.

I played about 6 or 7 World Champions and beat all except one, Eric Bristow, I played him twice and he murdered me on both occasions. I represented Scotland at all levels except Full International. Scottish Nodor Champion, Kwiz, Champion News of the World, North East of Scotland Champion, although this sounds a lot of doom and gloom I had a lot of great times playing darts. Got to meet a lot of good people and got near the top of a sport that I loved. I scored more 180s than any other player in Dundee or Tayside in fact one year I was presented with a Trophy for the highest score, that particular year I was the only player that hit 180 and this at a time when we played with big thick brass darts.

A good time to mention Tungsten Darts, these were a lot thinner but with the same weight. I bought my set on the Saturday and was playing in the Tayside Champion of Champions on the Wednesday. And the difference was phenomenal I could hit the treble twenty with my first dart and there was plenty of room for the other two if you had the skill. I don't think I lost a leg that night. This was when I met Graham Stewart I beat him in the final and he became a great pal, but he never ever let me forget that I had turned up with a busload from Dundee and he had come with only his Father in law Henny (eh you

had a lot of people shouting on ye that's the only reason you beat is) that was my first champion of champions I won it Three times.

I retired from darts in about 1980 my angina was getting really bad by this time and I found I was in that much pain I couldn't concentrate, One night I was playing in the Labour Club in Roseangle in the Dundee singles I was playing a guy called Higgins(he played for the Dundee United Social Club at the time) I was up 1-0 and winning the 2nd leg and I took a very bad pain in my chest and had to concede the game, and left darts. I stopped playing for a lot of years but was then talked into a comeback with a team that wasn't very good so there wouldn't be any pressure on me in a lower league. Slowly I started to play good again and was getting asked to step up to a higher league. In my opinion it was a disaster, here I was thinking that I would be allowed to get on with my game without any of the old nonsense, and for a while I did enjoy it. I was winning a lot more games than I was losing. Then I was talked into signing for Dave Allardyce at the Craigour Bar in Dens Road really enjoyed my time there met a lot of genuine friends and was never left out of the team. Then the Craigour was demolished and we had to move to The Great Eastern in Princes St. again had a lot of good times and was enjoying my darts.

A story, we had a guy playing for us who was always moaning about something and was always playing the Bandit Anyhow this particular night he had put in a lot of money and had no return so he started to say that the machine had been fixed, and he really went to town, right over the top, accusing the Owner Jim Brady of all manner of things and maybe should have been barred. The next Monday Charlies sitting in the bar knowing full well that he was in the wrong, and not looking forward to Jim coming in, anyhow in comes Jim, and Charlie, trying to get on his good side said" hello Jim your in early" and quick as a flash Jim replied " aye I got a phone call saying you were sitting we a smile on your face so I flew doon to see it " the pub just erupted even Charlie burst out laughing and Jim Brady went up in all our estimations.

As I say I was enjoying my darts, then the captain entered us all in the News of the World Singles Championship. I had won the North East of Scotland title of this competition a lot of years earlier and wasn't very keen, but decided to turn up anyway. As was normal I turned up early to get some practise in, the whole team was there, and I never lost a game,I was back to near my best on that night, maybe it was the feeling of getting back to serious competition. I was convinced that I was going to be able to up my game once the competition started and couldn't see myself getting beat (how wrong can you be) This young lad had been standing watching and started to accuse me of not toeing the line, we were playing off a rubber mat keeping the oche board for the competition proper. But this guy went on and on and on about me cheating and it was getting to me.

The competition started with us throwing from behind the oche, my first score was 11 and there he started, now that I couldn't cheat I was useless. The next thing that happened was like something out of a movie, the guy I was playing Alan Henderson asked the young lad to be quiet I said to just leave him alone, my throw 1st dart treble twenty 2nd dart treble twenty, 3rd dart I threw between my feet stuck in the floor and I just punched him, not a clever thing to do and nothing to be proud of, but here I was enjoying my darts again and meeting the same old thing, Retired again.

I had a great time and enjoyed the limelight and the competing. Met a lot of good friends and done a bit of travelling, won a lot of titles and had some exciting contests, and also, darts gave me the confidence to be successful at my work. My first team in the Friday league was the Celtic Club in the Hilltown. As soon as the game was over we had a sing song win, lose, or draw Arthur Lamb used to bring his guitar with him, Jim Cassidy sang Slim Whitman songs and Willie Shaw sung a song called "I'll join the legion, and woe betide anyone who missed the line" roll the guns" I was up singing along with them all great guys and good pals. How can you explain the feeling, of playing and beating, a World Champion at any sport, okay , it was only darts, but darts were really popular in those days, and champions that I beat were household names. Alan Evans, Leighton Rees, Jocky Wilson, John Low, Barry Twomellow, and the guy I couldn't beat Eric Bristow. I could have played him all year and never beat him. Its funny how its only now that I'm realising that at that time I was the best in Dundee and Tayside.

One lad that would have had a claim to Best in Tayside, in the 1970's, was George Nicoll from Arbroath. He was Scottish Singles Champion twice, and was the captain of the Scottish International team. But I won the Tayside Champion of Champions and The Tayside Open More times than him and I beat him on numerous occasions including the Scottish Singles so I'm going to claim I was as good as him. (George has passed now but he was arguably the best dart player in Scotland, I was never near that).

Three things that happened when I was playing darts are worth mentioning. The first thing, I was invited to do an exhibition in Noranside Young Offenders Institution, for the guards in their social club which was inside the establishment. Noranside is just outside Finavon just south of Brechin. After winning all my matches, my manager at the time asked for a volunteer to stand at the board. Lots of guys put their hands up not knowing what was about to happen. We picked a guy and gave him three cigarettes and asked him to stand at the dartboard. He was then asked to put a cigarette in his mouth, one at a time, and I then proceeded to throw my darts and hit the cigarettes and pin them to the dartboard. I would normally buy the guy a drink after this but he was so chuffed that I had given him a reputation of being very brave.

The second thing regarding a young offenders institution, I was asked in 1988 while running the Birkhill Inn if I would come out of retirement and play in the Tayside Champion of Doubles Champions with a guy I knew from the Dundee darts scene. We got through to the regional final held in Castle Huntly, then a young offenders institution; this was again held in the Staff Social Club. In the first game I was really rusty and playing terrible then from the crowd came a voice shouting, "Millar's useless, he is past it!" This had the opposite effect of what he was trying to do: he put me right on my game. We went on to win that regional final with no bother at all. We were not as successful in the Perthshire Finals being beaten in the semi-final. I wish someone there had been giving me a lot of stick: I might have done better. This next part is relevant to what I have just narrated.

I was playing Jake Thomson in the final of the Dundee Singles championship; his brother Billy started to heckle me shouting things like, "Get intae him, he's useless!" On hearing this, Jake turned to him and said in a loud voice, "You, shut up! He gets better when he's getting abuse." What a compliment.

I need to talk about you, when I started this you were very young, but your now 14 years old and somebody a grandparent can be very proud of. You're a very good footballer and a whiz kid with a computer. But where you're excelling is in school I could only dream of the reports you are getting. It seems to me that you are pretty good at whatever you try. I can only hope you continue to use your intelligence to further your chance at a life well above anything we, your family have achieved.

When I had to stop working due to ill health, at the age of 53 I felt very guilty and had to explain to everyone in great detail why I wasn't at my work. I took up indoor bowls got pretty good at it and won a few trophies, but had to give it up because of Angina stupidly tried out door Bowls that was worse. I was lucky in the fact that I was a reader so read a lot to try and keep myself mentally fit, but yearned for something to get my teeth into, along came the Fairmuir Social. I was attending for about 2 years got my membership, and then was asked if I would go on the Committee.

The next step was Assistant Convener 2006 and in this position, I was able to use my management skills, to come up with ideas that would benefit the Club. I was in that position for approx. 5 years then in 2011 the Convener was promoted to President and I was given the Conveners job. Believe me when I say the Club in a lot of ways has been a godsend I've come into my own and love being involved in something worthwhile again. There are moments when I could see it far enough, but most of the time, I enjoy the mental challenges the position throws up. And we do a lot of charity work and that's very rewarding.

Can I try to tell you about my Illness, because it's a source of worry for me regarding you and your Mum. All of my Mums family had Angina and it was on my dad's side of the family too. They both suffered with Heart problems, so it was inevitable that I and my two brothers would inherit the gene. The hope I have is, that the lifestyle you have now, will protect you and your Mum. Its well documented that most angina is caused by poor diet something that you will hopefully never have to go through.

When my Mum was cooking for us everything was cooked in Fat no vegetable oils in those days. So it goes without saying that their parents cooked in the same manner. Chip Teas were cheap in these days and Mum was too tired to cook when she got home, and all these shops cooked with Fat can you imagine you went into the Chipper for a Pie supper the chips were fried in fat and the pie was cooked in the fat also.

It must have been playing havoc with our Arteries but it tasted good. Any how I started to have pains in my chest in 1978, when I was 38, and was being treated for Stress And Anxiety for 11 years. I had my first heart attack at the age of 46. Somebody invented a thing called an Angiogram, this is a camera that is inserted into your groin through your main artery. So in 1989 I had a blockage identified and received my first Angioplasty in 1990 in Glasgow Royal.

A balloon is inserted into your artery travels to your heart, to the position of the blockage and blown up, this opens up the artery and increases the blood flow. And relieves the pain. I had a heart attack and small stroke in 1993 and had to have another 2 angioplasty's in Aberdeen Royal then in 2000 had another small stroke and had to have another angioplasty in Edinburgh Royal. You visited me in Ninewells Hospital in Dundee when I had my 5th angioplasty this time a metal stent was put in this was Feb. 2011. I have a Prostrate Problem I have had for a lot of years (taking tablets) I have also been diagnosed with Asthma and Arthritis and now bordering on Diabetes I have recently had to be operated on 3 times now to have Abscesses taken out. All the Doctors I have spoken to say the chances of you or your Mum having Angina are miniscule., so that's a source of comfort.

There's only one way I can end this story and that's by telling you how much I love you and how very proud I am of you.

Circa 2001*****

Hi, it's now 2020 and I've finally picked this up again but maybe struggle to put things down, you're now a grown man, but we will have a go.

The Fairmuir Club let's start there when I got the Job of Social Convener I wanted to put my mark on the Club. I put on a Sixties Extravaganza, with The Tremeloes, Searchers and Herman's Hermits, (i will look up the date and insert it)

I put forward a ticket price of £15 uproar " nobody will pay that for a concert in a Club " Can't remember how long, but less than an hour, all tickets had been sold. People still talk about it yet and that might be the thing I'm remembered for.

I also started Lucky Number Bingo with some houses paying out £1,000. I brought in the Web Page and Face book which has helped the finances of the Club. I brought in the Backdrop Curtain. I moved the Joe 90s from 20p up to £1 and that has also helped the finances. One of my biggest achievements was being responsible for starting the Bands on a Sunday afternoon, this has brought in a lot of money for the coffers.

I could sit here and go through all the politics of the Club, but suffice to say that up until now I know of only one person who was on the fiddle and that was long before my time. Worth mentioning my brother Andy was at one time also Assistant Convener in the Fairmuir Club and left to be the Social Convener in the North End Social Club. must have been something in the genes.

I well remember when you were about 4 or 5 years old asking me in company, "you were living in Invergowrie Drive at the time " why did you dump my Granny Pat I didn't know where to look; somebody changed the subject pretty quick. I was with your Granny Pat 21 years and loved her all the years I was there, and although it's hard to explain, it's very difficult to just stop loving someone after all that time, it goes on to a different type of love. Granny Mags felt the same about her Husband, once you have a relationship for a long time and then have children it's there all the time. People grow apart, I have never spoken bad about your Granny Pat and Granny Mags has never spoken bad about her ex Husband. After all this time, this, may not have answered your question.

How can I start this again without mentioning Covid 19, the pandemic that we are currently in the middle off. What can be said about it, we have lost 2 or 3 neighbours, and quite a few Members of the Club have also succumbed. Just today I've just been told about a Member Bobby Donnan passing away today, although you wouldn't remember him, I'm sure you must have poured him a few pints.

I have tried to find Military records your Great Granda my Dad. I am going to have to get in touch with the Black Watch Centre at Perth Re. my Dad. But as far as My Grandfather goes, your Great Great Granda it looks pretty hopeless, as I have said before he was born in 1845 and his military service was sometime before 1877 don't know where I could search to find his records.

This is info that you already know but help with the years might be of interest. Granny Mags and I moved out of Fintry in 1984 and moved to Arbroath Road, and then moved to Barry Downs in 2013. We stayed in the first house for seven years and then we moved to the house next door, we have managed to keep our same House Number 52b. Fantastic Community down here we have made a lot of friends.

I regularly go out for a meal with about 14 of the guys down here usually once a month. Granny Mags is the same with the ladies, as you are getting older it helps to have friends around you. Jim McIlravey has quite voluntary cut my grass here since the day we moved in. and Ian Kidd hands me Papers every day. And as you know we spend every Xmas day with them, except 2020.

18th January 2021 sitting here quite proud, you have just had your bid accepted, for your first Flat, 333 Clepington Road. That's you on the property ladder. No doubt your Mum and Dad will be the same as me, probably worse, a bit apprehensive about you leaving the nest, and striking out on your own, but like me they will understand the need to spread your wings and face the World. Just don't be frightened to ask for any advice, Mum and Dad will willingly help. Me too or Granny Mags if required.

Furthermore, I would like to add how proud I am of Jamie, not only were his school marks fantastic but he was also the first in the family to go to university. After he left school, at eighteen, he was asked if he would consider going to a school in America; he finished up in a school in Albuquerque for one year and returned home to Scotland and has worked full time since.

As a postscript - my brushes with famous people.

My favourite boxer of all time was Floyd Patterson. He was in his time the youngest man to win the Heavyweight Title. He was also the first Heavyweight Champion to regain the Heavyweight Championship. He was beaten by Ingemar Johanssen by Technical Knockout, he then Knocked out Johanssen to win back his Title. When I was a Sales Supervisor with Strathmore Springs one of my customers was the Angus Hotel, I walked into Reception and who was standing there Floyd Patterson himself I was astounded, shook his hand but forgot to ask him for his autograph. Still have a Photograph I sent away for when I was in my twenties. What a Day.

Football Manager Sir Alec Ferguson. Strathmore Springs for a while supplied Dundee F.C. and Dundee United with a new Energy drink Gluctoza. They also Sponsored a few games, Dundee are playing Aberdeen at Dens Park, Our Managing Director David Brooks and Scottish Sales Manager George Service and myself were in attendance. I was given the job of picking the Man of the Match, I promptly went to the sports writers and asked if they could pick him, they had a lot more experience than me. They picked Gordon Strachan an Aberdeen Player. During the game a Dundee fan ran on the pitch and assaulted Gordon during the game. End of the game and Aberdeen had won 1-0 I was then asked to make sure the Man of the Match would come to the board room and receive his Man of the Match trophy.

After a certain length of time, because I knew Managers spoke to the players after the game, I decided to go to the away dressing room and inform the management of Aberdeen that Gordon Strachan was invited to the Boardroom to collect his Trophy. What a bad mistake. When i reached the door of the dressing room the police were already there, they had knocked on the door wanting to interview Gordon about the assault. After a While Alec Ferguson came to the door and was telling the Police that they would see him when he Alec Ferguson was ready, and he wasn't very nice about it. He then Looked at me, " and what the F... are you wanting, I tried to explain to him but he was by this time into one of his famous tantrums, shouting and swearing at me at the top of his voice. The Police then intervened and asked me if I wanted him charged. I said no and went to return to the Boardroom.

On the way back one of the sports writers I think he wrote for the Sporting Post at the time, called me over and asked if myself and Margaret were going to be attending a licensed Trade function on the following Tuesday, and would it be okay if him and his Wife who was a sales rep for a wine company could join us. Before I could reply a couple of well dressed gentlemen pulled me away and asked if i was telling the Press about my run in with Mr Ferguson. I explained about the Function we were attending on the Tuesday. They apologised on behalf of Aberdeen Football Club, and assured me that Mr Ferguson would be into the Boardroom to apologize.

I returned to the Boardroom and informed my Bosses what had Happened, by this time I had calmed down and didn't want Mr Ferguson to apologise in front of everybody. I must

have been Living in cuckoo land. In came Mr Ferguson accompanied by the two Directors that had spoken to me earlier. I went forward to tell Mr Ferguson that it was finished with and there was no need to apologise. Another very bad mistake, he started ranting and raving about what he would do to me if I ever came near any of his Dressing Rooms again, one of my customers Graeme Philips who owned the Hawkhill Tavern intervened and told Mr. Ferguson in no uncertain manner , to get on his Bus and leave. Graeme was a big laddie and knew at that time I had a Heart Complaint. I still can't believe this incident happened, especially when you consider Aberdeen had won, the Team obviously didn't play as well as he wanted them to. One of these famous people you wish you had never met.

His Royal Highness Prince Philip. My brother Andy lived in a cottage on West Friarton Farm outside Newport in Fife. He invited 6 of us to come over for a barbecue, and he knew Prince Philip was due to pass the cottage driving his Carriage During a competition. We were all sitting in the front garden when he drove past he said " good afternoon are you all enjoying this lovely day " we all replied and I Distinctly remember touching my Forehead (what an idiot) and saying Good Afternoon. He drove past and continued up to the Farmyard. Andy was filming all this on his Camcorder.

We all took off up a path that led from the cottage up to the Farmyard, when we arrived Andy continued to Film the Prince. There were tables laid with food and drink for the Prince and his party. The Farmer and his wife had vacated the Farmhouse so that the Prince could use the bathroom if he so wished. A female aide approached the Prince and informed him that Farmhouse was available to him, he promptly replied " where is everyone else going " behind the Barn was the reply " well i will be joining them " he said, and turned to head to the back of the Barn, he then stopped turned around and said to Andy " turn that Camera Off ". For all his Titles just one of the guys a proper Gentleman.