

By *Sanners Gow*

THE BYWAY OF DREAMS

Many years ago I broke doon wi my work's van in an affa bad snaa storm. I wiz pitten up for the nicht wi a fairm cheil by the name o Robbie Sangster and his dochter Bunty. A richt fine lad wiz Rab fair full o stories so I write een here as he tellt it tae ma on that stormy nicht so mony years ago.

“His name wiz Donald Reid an he vrocht as a shepherd tae een o the ‘bunnet lairds’ up the Cabrach wye. A hard taskmaister wiz this ‘bunnet laird’ an renowned for illtreatin his fairm servants by hard vrocht an gye peer conditions. Noo Donald wiz getting on in years an nae sae swaak about the legs as he eence wiz. The ‘laird’ hid for a while back been gien him a hard time garrin peer aal Donald tak the yowies in fae the surroundin hills weeks afore they should’ve been.

Onywee peer Donald hid been given a time tae get them doon fae the hills that wid’ve put twa young men tae a struggle. Donald kent fine noo that he wid be given the saik because there wisna onywee on this God’s earth that he’d manage this yokin. Wi a weary fit him an his aal Border collie Paddy sets oot for the Buck, their first stop on the search for the yowies. Donald teen it canny kind for he wiz gye hippet nooadays and he lookit doon at his peer aal dog faa’s walkin wisna muckle better norr his maister’s. He bent doon an gave him a clap. ‘Well aal pal it looks like it’s the peer’s hoose for us aal buggers!’ He shuddered at the thocht o the peer’s hoose. The fowk were aa dressed in black an starched fite collars that tore yer neck reed raw. He’d seen them plenty enough as they were teen fae the place an made tae vrocht aboot the toon for nae pey apart fae mait an the bed back at the workhoose. He kent fine that Paddy widnae be alloed tae come wi him and wid maist likely jist be shot. Donald sat doon aside the track an ruffled Paddy’s luggies and he put his aal heed intae Donald’s bosey as if he kent fit wiz gyan on. Paddy hid been his constant companion for fifteen years an mair an the very thocht o some big bugger shootin him broke Donald’s hert. He cyaached aboot at the willin luggies an let the tears o a desperate man faa. Aifter a fylie he got tae his feet wi gye chave an says tae Paddy ‘Come aal pal we’d best get yokit!’ Reluctantly Paddy shoochled tae his feet an hirppled alang wi Donald.

Donald an Paddy got tae the hill o the Buck aboot haaf wyes throwe the mornin. Donald gave a silent curse for nae one yowie did he see. Speakin oot loud he said ‘Weel Paddy we maun cross ower tae the Glass side o the hill they must be doon aboot the haughs?’ Fin they got tae the sheltered side o the Buck Donald sat doon an

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teen oot their denner. A corter o breid each an a lump o kebbach. He haavered the cheese wi Paddy an they ate like kings. Fae the first days they'd been thegither him and Paddy wint haaf shares in aa mait. That's the wye it wiz and that's the wye it wid ayee be. He scratted Paddys luggies an got his haan lickit in response. That's fin he saw something glitter in amongst a puckle boulders.

Donald wint ower tae see fit it could be and wiz surprised tae see it wiz een o yon fancy telescope things the toffs cairried finivver they came up here for the shootin. Pickin it up Donald could see that it hidnae been lyin there affa lang for it wiz been dry an wid've been soakin o weet if it hid been there owerneicht. He could see it wiz a gye expensive lookin instrument an wid've teen years o Donalds pey tae buy yin. Faivver hid lost it couldna be far awa so he put it intae his pyoke in case he met in wi them an if no he'd gie it tae the factor fin he wun hame the wye. By the time they got doon tae the Haughs baith o them were fair fochendeen an Donald could've grat fin he saw the yowies werena there ava but mair nor a mile awa on anither hill . He could see some them even farer awa. He couldna mak them oot affa weel. That's fin he mind aboot the telescope. Takin it fae his pyoke he fichered aboot wi the lens covers that jist slid back tae reveal the lenses. He put it tae his ee an aifter a bit o a chawe found oot how tae focus it. Michty the yowie swam intae focus an lookit as if it wiz only but feet awa an nae a couple o miles. He swore he could even hear it bleatin an it wisna till he teen the telescope fae his ee that he realised there wiz a yowie at his feet.

Paddy got rale excited at this an started barkin. Donald lookit at the yowie an windered why he'd nae seen it afore? He focused the telescope eence mair far he'd been lookin at the yowie but saw it wisna there. Instead he lookit at anither yin far tae the richt an focused ontae it wi the same result as the last yin. It wiz the same an lookit feet awa an nae the couple o miles. This time though he heard the bleatin o twa yowies and fin looked at his feet there wiz twa o them noo. Shocked kind he eence mair lookit through the telecsope an that yowie fae the distant hill wiz gone. Wi an "Oh michty!" he threw the telescope fae him as if it wiz reed hate. Fit wiz gyan on here? Paddy seemed fair pleased though an in nae time hid baith yowies timmered doon as if ready tae drive them. Donald wi a "Na na this canna be happenin!" sat himsel doon on the heather. Takin oot his pipe he kenneled it up tae calm himsel doon an gie him a bittie time tae think."

Robbie takin the opportunity ana seen hid his ain pipe kennled as weel.

" Well noo Donald sat there for a fair meenty thinkin aboot the ongyans. He'd decided he'd jist leave the telescope far it wiz for he thocht it hid been sanctified aathegither. But Paddy hid ither ideas and fetched an laid it at his feet. Donald shoochled awa fae it in fear. Na na he wiz haein nithing tae dee wi it. But then again on reflection he thocht tae himsel if he used the sanctified instrument tae collect the

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yowies he'd avoid the peer's hoose an Paddy the bullet. Canny kind he picket up the telescope an tried it again but in a different wye jist tae prove something tae himsel.

He focused on the nearest yowie the aimed the scope at the far awa hill. Fin he glanced doon he could see een o the yowies at his feet wiz gone. In a second or twa he teen it back tae his feet. Paddy yowled at this an came ahin his legs. Bendin doon tae clap him he said "It's aaricht ma laddie nithing will hurt ye!"

Aifter that day Donald used the telescope tae tak aa the yowies doon fae the hills. An mighty is saved him an Paddy a lot o traachlin aboot. Of coorse he wiz careful nae tae use it in places faar fowk could see him. But it wiz handy for aa that even jist takkin them doon nearer wiz a great help. Fyles fin he lookit throwe the scope he could almost see a figure standin tae the left o the lens and ivvery time he tried tae focus ontae it there wiz nithing there. Onywy Donald managed tae vrocht awa an managed tae keep the bunnet laird at bey. But nana he still found faut wi Donald and Paddy.

Ae mornin at yokin time the laird tellt Donald that he'd nae mair need for his services and that he'd tae be oot o his hoosie this foreneen. Donald protested about this but tae nae avaul. Oot it wiz tae be an that wiz that! The laird hid a new lad wytin tae wun intae the hoose. Jist at that he made his appearance throwe the close. Mighty he wiz a big strushle lookin lad wi a reed heed an beard on him an a richt scowlin face. He nivver spoke but jist gloured at Donald, Paddy bared his teeth at him so Donald made a haan for Paddy's collar tae stop him fae makkin a darry at the big bugger but it wiz ower late. Paddy made a go at him but the big bastard kicked him in the ribs an put Paddy in the air. He landed ontae his side yowlin.

Donald wint tae Paddy tae check on him aa the while cursin the big reed deevil. This got the lad rale vrocht up and he made a go at Donald but Donald aal an deen as he wiz made a gweed show against the much younger man. It could only end ae wye though an at's how it ended wi Donald getting a gweed thrashin. It wiz the bunnet laird that put a stop tae it though wi a couple o the ither lads aboot the place. The big reed bull wiz roarin oot o it in rage fin it wiz put a stop tae. The laird didna end it wi thocht for Donald though, he wiz mair concerned about the big lad for he wiz a cousin o his ain an if he killed the aal useless man he'd get hung. Donald got up fae the grun in agony he nicht be broken in body but nae it soul that wiz tae come in a meenit or twa. He wiz pitten fae the place athoot his goods & chattles an nae a penny o the pey due tae him. He'd nithing else tae dee but tak his illtreated dog intae his bosie an leave the place.

On the road a bittie he stoppit an laid Paddy doon an checked oot far he'd been kicked by the big bastard. Nae ribs seemed broken but he didna ken fit damage hid been deen tae Paddy's intimmers. Paddy jist lay there whimperin an breathin gye

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hard. Aifter about an oor's time passin and him rubbin Paddy's chest he seemed tae get a bittie in better fettle an even got tottery kind tae his feet. Donald kent his dog wiz damaged badly but the plan he'd for baith o them wid be makkin athing fine afore lang. In fits an starts they eventually made it as far as the tap o the Buck hill.

He got Paddy comfortable intae his bosie and wiz rewarded wi his face bein lickit. He looked doon intae the face o his best pal in aa the world and couldna help the tears. Makkin a fuss o him he tellt him athing wid be fine. He thocht tae himsel that nae wye wiz he gan intae the peer's hoose nor wiz onybody gyan tae shoot Paddy. He stroked the wee heedy kennin fine they werena gan tae be leavin this place. "

Donald sat there wi Paddy in his bosie and he could hear his breathin become mair an mair laboured. 'Nae lang noo aal pal' he muttered.' Donald wiz still mighty angry at fit hid happened back at the fairm but he kent weel enough there wiz nithing he could dee about it ava. Unless? Donald teen oot the telescope fae his pyoke and ower the next oor he moved ivvery yowie he could see and put them as far awa as he could an scattered the yowies ontae ivvery hill. That wid gie the big bastard a puckle days hard vrocht tae get them aa back again.

Jist as he feenished deein this he saw the shada at the left o the lense again an quickly focused ontae it and this time he could see it wiz a woman weerin a cloak. She spoke tae him for he'd teen her inaboot wi the glaiss as he'd been deein wi the yowies afore. Pittin the scope doon Donald lookit up at her and he felt Paddy gie a bittie o a move. She wiz a beautiful woman in the prime o life that even the big hood fae the cloak couldna hide. "Aye Donald an Paddy baith o ye wid be in a gye pickle I'd be thinkin?" At this Paddy got tae his feet an lickit Donald's face then started tae loup about the wye he used tae afore aal age teen a hud. Donald the woman forgotten held a work wi Paddy and the tears fleein fae him unheeded. It wiz then he realised that he'd nae pain himsel. That stoppit him in his tracks though. He glanced up at the bonny woman an speired at her faa she wiz. She jist smiled an put oot her haan 'Come on Donald an Paddy I wiz sent here tae tak ye doon amongst us 'Gweed Fowk'

So saying she teen Donald's haan in hers an wi Paddy loupin about wi excitement they walked intae the forivver along 'The Byway of Dreams !'"