



Sanners Gow

Mair Doric Tales
an' Folklore
o' the Buchan

Digital Edition

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2021

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You cannot steal that which is freely given and this is a gift to you, the reader.

Stories are not owned, they are created, and these tales, told round the campfire over generations were written down from memory by Sanners Gow. Many voices had a hand in creating the stories and this book is dedicated to all who enjoyed long nights of storytelling in a different place and time. They are part of the timelessness of creativity.

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Bleed Snotters & Eebroos.

Bella Dirrum wiz jist feenishin her week's washin an teen it oot fae the biler using the big tyangs for the job. She closed doon the fire allo the biler and teen oot the hate coals an put them intae the iron bucket aside the biler an put the lid on as ticht as she could tae smoor them. In that wye she keepit the fuel for neist Tyesday's wash. Aa that wid be nott neist time wiz a bittie o stick for a kennler, a puckle paper an syne athing wid kittle up fine. A scoopy or twa fresh coal on it eence it wiz kennled an that wid gee her enough tae heat that wash.

Bella hid five o a faimily, three loons an twa quines so there wiz ayee washin tae dee. She put the washin throwe the wringer then up tae the bleachin green. A quick look up at the sky assured her nae rain wiz on its wye so up wint the clyse ontae the rope. Bella wisnae ower pleased wi her wash though because soap wiz getting gye scarce tae get a hud o noo wi the war gyan on.

Aabody hid said it wid be ower by Christmas. Aye but fit Christmas were they spikkin aboot? Here it wiz nineteen saxteen an still nae signs o't bein 'ower'.

Her man Albert hid been ower there since the very start wi the Gordons. He hidna really needed tae gyang wi him bein nearly fifty an vrochtin on the land as he did. But his sense o duty an wi so mony o the young loons getting yokit intae uniform an gyan aaf tae Frunce wi a kilt abeen their knee he'd hin tae gyang wi them richt reason or neen. In his wye o't he'd tae look aifter them. So next she'd

kent he'd come hame fae Aiberdeen fully riggit playin the pipes at their heed as the Gordons marched throwe the toon on their wye tae war.

Ach! She shook her heed at the thocht o aa the causalities that fulled the paper ilka wikk

“Men bodys an their senseless killin! Nae doot the ither side’s papers were jist the same! Raa upon raa o laddies killed leavin familiess broken herted jist the same as it did here,” she muttered angrily.

She'd said as muckle at a kirk meetin the nicht afore an wiz near bainished fae the place for sayin it. So much for religious feelings o humanity tae aa men? Tae Bella a deed laddie wiz a deed laddie fitivver uniform he wore?

The meenister hid teen her tae ae side and made it plain that wi her sayin things like that could be seen as sedition and she could end up in the tower o London on breed an water. Bella realised she shouldna hiv said fit she did and hid overlookit that maybe some o the fowk there hid already lost familly tae the ivver hungry moo o war.

Bella usually a gye quate and unassuming person could've wished the grun tae open up an swally her. She kent she'd deen wrang and tellt the meenister that. He seemed pleased enough at this an tellt her as if she wiz a simple bairn nae tae say sic things again an waikit awa wi its heedy rockin.

Later she noticed him spikkin tae a boorach o weemin aboot something. Bella hid nae problem o kennin fit the ‘something’ wiz for aa een lockit ontæ her an some were gye hostile. On the surface Bella

lookit suitably cowed but on the inside she wiz livid. Nae at the hostile weemin for they like their men hid been caught up in a war nae o their makkin. It wiz the men like the meenister wi their arrogance faa condoned the slaachter and even teen a direct haan in the feedin o the open maw o war by huddin religious meetings up an doon the county tae recruit even mair laddies tae feed the mull o war. That's the bit she couldna staamach ava. Her ain meenister helpin tae gither cannon fodder fae aa the wee toonies aroon. That fairly stuck in her craw. Bella jist shook her heed at the memory.

Gyan intae the hoose Bella put the kettle on the fire and hearin a chap at the door she gid throwe tae see faa it wiz. At the back o the door on the fleer she saw three fite feathers. Somebody hid shovved them throwe the letterbox. Angert at this sign o coordice she haaled the door open tae be confronted by three o the weemin fae the meetin o the nicht afore. Michty but they aa tore intae her leavin her athoot a name. Bella wiz a bittie wrang fittid tae begin wi an mair or less steed like a gype while they abused her.

Eence they'd ran oot o steam an afore they could catch their breath Bella hid found her tongue an gid them 'tammy-come-a-roochtum.' Bella Dirrum wiz a gye bit aaler than the three deemies an kent the seed, breed and generation o them. Een wiz the wife o the local coonsilor, the ither the domine's wife an the ither o aa things the postmaister's wife. Noo her oot o the three should be weel aware o the cost o war in lives for she must see the telegrams sent oot tae the bereaved? On tap o that and tae Bella even worse neen o them hid onybody fechtin ower in Frunce.

She mind on them fin they were gyan aboot quines wi

snotters fae their noses an nae nickers tae haap their modesty. Bella gid them that yin full an bye an by God that struck hame for it wiz the truth that neen o them could deny. Staamin their wi their fancy frocks an bliddy stupid hatties covered in silk flooers on their heedies. Aye they'd aa pasts tae hide but nae fae Bella Dirrum she kent them richt weel.

Noo if things hid jist been left there Bella wid've slammed the door in their faces. The three deemies hid fairly been pitten in their place and wid've left. Nae one o them wid've said onything aboot fit Bella hid tellt them aboot their pasts for they'd aa hid their een opened as regards the ithers. But sadly for aa involved that wisna tae be. It came fae the postmaister's wife wi its haanies on its hippies. She lichted the touch paper that wiz gan tae be the spikkelation for a generation tae come an mair. Even tae this very day the locals threatin ony illdeein wi 'I'll gee ye the Dirrum dicht if ye dinna be quate', athoot really kennin how it came aboot.

Well noo this is the wye o't. O the three deemies at Bella's door it wiz the postmaister's wife that wiz the bully and she'd coerced the ither deemies tae post the white feathers. They hid been unwilling at first but hid wint alang wi it fin she said Bella needed tae be taught a lesson. The ither lassies peyed deference tae the postmaister's wife jist like the locals did wi her 'Don't you know who I am? spikk tae onybody that didna show her proper respect. She thocht tae try it noo on Bella. Bella at this point hid nearly closed the door but that words infuriated Bella for she'd heard it coontless times in queues at the shops. Of course the shopkeepers came ower aa deferential and made sure she got the very best fae allo the coonters.

Pullin the door open Bella wint richt inaboot tae its face sayin.

“Aye fine div I ken faa you are an fine div I ken the seed, breed an generation o ye!”

Nae feenished though Bella gave her her real character. Afore she'd jist been angry, noo though the touchpaper hid been lichted. Bella gave her it full an bye aa aboot her father haein a cairryon wi the school teacher and her haein tae leave the toon an ging sooth tae hae the bairn oot o sicht oot o mind. The postmaister's wife tried tae protest but Bella peyed her nae heed an wint on tae tell her her ain man wiz ayee ficherin wi een o the teller deemies oot the back o the post office aifter lowsin time. This really got the postmaister's wife's dander up an she made tae slap Bella across the mooth but the slap nivver landed.

The rest is history, as they say. It wiz said the three deemies wint awa shredded. Bitties o hatties an silk flooers were strewn aboot the place alang wi tufts o hair wi the very skin o their scalps still attached. The screams could be heard at the ither side o the brig as they fled for their lives. But even better than that the meenister happened by and got involved even tryin tae gee Bella a sleekit slap or twa tae save the cream o society fae the furrlin dervish that wiz Bella.

It wiz said he ran doon the street haaf nyakit wi its hannies tryin tae haap its modesty aifter Bella tore him tae ribbons and him screamin for aa the saints in heaven tae help him as he flew doon the street wi a hump on its back bane like the Bennachie Futtritt wi the bleed, snotters an eebroos fleein fae its mooth ana!

So there the story ends. But! And I'll say this tae ye. If
onybody threatens ye wi 'The Dirrum Dicht' hereaboots jist gyang
awa an dinna look back because it might be some o Bella's fowk that
still bide aboot here an believe me ye dinna want tae get them angert!

Burns'Nicht.

I'd jist feenished paintin the wee office o a fish seller in the Broch. It hid been a fine job an pretty straight forritt; white ceilings, magnolia waas and gloss painted widwork. As I said, straight forritt. The owner wiz fair pleased wi the work and gave me a wee box o kippers tae tak hame tae my mither. Fair chuffed wi this I put aa my gear intae the van and headed the road hame tae Macduff.

That nicht me and some o my mates hid booked a Burns' supper at the Knowes hotel in Macduff; it wisna till eight o'clock so I'd plenty time tae get hame and changed,

It wiz an affa bonny clear nicht and the stars were twinklin awa in the heavens. In reality I wid rather hiv been oot wi my telescope lookin at the stars on a bonny nicht like this instead o sitting in a hotel, but aawell I'd made a promise an that as they wiz that.

Aboot fower miles oot o the Broch I decided tae turn richt an head alang the coast road instead o bidin ontae the good main road. This wye wid add miles tae my journey because it's a gye twisted an hilly road and narra tae boot. Tae this very day I dinna ken why I went that road. Maybe I'd the idea tae stop an look at the stars athoot light pollution for a while but fitivver wiz my reason it widna be lang afore I regretted it.

I passed through the toon o New Aiberdour and headed tae the road that splits, one road tae the richt wid tak ye doon tae St Drostan's kirk and Drostan's well. The ither road I wanted took ye doon tae the wee briggie that crosses the Dour burn and intae Refillan

Den. It wiz as I came up oot o the den that things began tae change.

The bonny clear nicht sky disappeared and it started tae snaa at the self same time the road got affa rough as if I wiz gan up an aal fairm track. I didna get a lot o time tae winder aboot it because the wind rose and the snaa made athing whiteoot. I put the wipers on but they did bugger all, so I'd tae slow richt doon tae a crawl. On tap o that the heater wisna workin so the windshield gummed up. There wiz wee clear bits in the flurries o snaa and in een o them I saw a pull-in aff the road, the last thing I wanted wiz anither car plooin up my erse. I did that an pulled aff the road and like an eejit I turned aff the engine.

I sat in the van for a good while as the wind and snaa buffeted aroon me. In nae time I started tae feel the caal but I could dee nithing aboot it so wid jist hae tae suffer. Nae wye wiz I gan tae rin the engine in a snaastorm; I'd eence seen a lad bein teen oot a corp wi deein that. He'd been gassed wi his ain engine. At least there wiz plenty dust sheets tae cover masel while I waited for the storm tae pass. Aboot an oor or so later the win wint doon and the snaa kind o eased aff.

There must've been aboot a sax inch o snaa hid fell so I kent my Ford Escort van could cope wi that nae problem (that wiz back in the days fin maist vans hid rear wheel drive and could ging throwe snaa athoot a hitch). I turned they key---click-click-click. Nithing! I pressed the horn---nithing the lichts---nithing. Cursin like a trooper I got oot and cleared the snaa aff the bonnet then popped the bonnet release. Bang! It came awa in my hand. I pulled eence mair but aa that I got wiz the snapped cable. It looked like I wisna gyan onywye

this nicht so I wint back intae the van and sat shiverin wi the caal.

Wi nae licht o ony kind I raiked aboot ahin the seat for my big aal army jaiket I used for vrochtin ootside. I fun it and pulled it oot. It wiz glazed wi aal pint roon the wrists so fin I pulled it on it teen a minty afore I got ower the shudder o ma wrists against the glazed pint.

I wiz caal enough as it wiz but the crusty smelly jaicket made me even caaler and I sat there shiverin. Aifter a while and wi a load o dust sheets coverin ma I could feel my body still cooling doon. Sitting inactive in a works van wi nae heating and the ootside temperature drappin rapidly I thocht- “Na na! This isna for me,” and decided tae walk my wye hame or at least tae the nearest fairm so I could phone an tell my fowk fit hid happened and nae tae worry.

I got oot intae the chilled air that near cut throwe ma tae the bone. My legs were fushionless and I wabbled aboot a fair bit till I got them tae tak ma weicht. The sky wiz bonny and clear again and I could see the heavens like a paintin wi the icy glint o distant stars.

Even though I wiz haein a gye Chavez o it walkin throwe the snaa I wiz still struck by the wonder o the sky abeen and wished I’d my telescope. As I walked, my body started tae warm up fae the inside and I could feel life returning tae my extremities. Jesus but I’d been bloody caal sittin in the aal van.

I must’ve been walkin for a couple o miles and nivver yet hid I seen one sign o habitation, nae one glimmer o licht. I kent this wiz a sparsely populated bit o the coast but for aa that I thocht I’d hae come across a fairm or a crafty by noo?

Ivvery noo an then I’d stop and hae a look at the stars and my

God whit a panorama the sky wiz tae the human ee. Mighty even though I'd cursed being stuck, one part o ma wiz glaid that I had because in aa the years I'd looked at the nicht sky I'd nivver afore seen it looking this gweed.

I cairried on walkin skitterin aboot here an there as I stepped ontae saft snaa wi ice ablow it. I still couldna believe that a budy could get caught up in sic a storm jist oot o the blue like that. A lesson tae the unwary I suppose. It wid've been aboot a mile faarer in the road afore I eventually saw a wee glimmer o licht aff tae my left. I wiz glaid I'd saw it because flurries o snaa were beginnin tae rise up eence mair and the sky wiz becomin darker as the clouds hid the stars.

As I walked I keepit a gweed lookoot for the eyne o a road leadin up the wye tae the licht. In the event the placie wisna far aff the road and I waikit my wye intae a close and thankfully oot o the worst o the noo heavy faain snaa. I could see the peely wally licht aheed o ma comin fae a windae heich up in the buildin and chappit at the door ablow the lichted windae.

After a minty or twa the door opened and a woman steed there hudin a paraffin lamp. Fin she saw the sotter I wiz in she gid oot wi an "Ae me laddie ye'd better come awa in!"

She steed aside tae let ma wun in and tellt ma jist tae hud up the stairs. It wiz jist a stair that wint fair aheed and I could see by the scam o the lamp that the waas were the aalfarrent timmer linings pintit dark oak. The waft o the fine smell o cookin came doon the stairs tae meet ma and ma mooth started tae water.

"Jist hud tae the left ma loon!" The woman tellt ma as she

followed me up the stairs.

I lifted the aalfarrent latch an stepped intae the room. The first thing I saw wiz the big bleezin fire tae ma front as the heat hut ma.

An aal man wiz sittin on a cheer at the yett o the fire an lookit up as I came in sayin;

“Michty min fit the hell are ye deein oot in a nicht like this?”

The woman heisted me inabout tae the fire and made me sit doon opposite the aal man. I could see she wid've been a gye bit younger than the aal man, maybe in her early fifties at a guess, so I teen it she wiz his dochter.

She'd her greyin hair up in a bun and wore een o yon ‘pinnies’ I think ye caa them, wi an aapron abeen it. She'd bonny reed chikks and the bluest een I'd ivver seen an a richt bonny smilin face. She fussed aboot ma getting the weet jaicket fae ma and made ma tak aff my beets weet socks and bilersuit.

She hung my jaicket, bilersuit and socks ontae a brass rail at the side o the fire then wint awa tae the ither side o the room an came back wi a pair o carpet slippers for ma feet. Aa the while the aal man wiz ficherin at the binkie at the side o the fire spoonin sugar an pittin some bilin water intae a bowl. Tae feenish it he added some whisky fae a flask.

Geein it a steer he handed it tae ma sayin;

“Here min get ye that doon ye tae warm yer cheeled beens!”

God min, nithing tasted better as the hate sweet liquid made its wye doon tae ma teem belly. I could feel the heat o the fire warmin ma fae the ootside and the toddy deein its work fae the inside.

I wisna muckle o a drinker back then usually a nippy or twa at

Hogmanay and at ither times a bottle o beer. That nicht though whether it wiz a mixture o bein caal or takin drink on an empty belly it fairly wint tae ma heed.

The aal man laughed fin he saw the effect it wiz haein ontae ma an seen hid made me up anither.

“Tak yer time wi this een though laddie and get the bleed warmed!”

I did as he bid an jist sipped at it, feelin it gan doon tae ma puddens.

The man wid've been weel intae his seventies. He wore a flat cap, a sark athoot a collar and a pair o galluses wi fit lookit like moleskin troosers and a pair o tackity beets. He leaned ower tae a wee table at the side o his cheer and teen oot a pipe and a taper. He lichted it wi the taper and the fine smell o pipe tabacca waffted roon ma.

Sittin back wi a satisfied grunt he speired at ma why I'd been oot in sic a storm. So I tellt him fit hid happened and askit o him if I could use his phone.

At this he laached oot loud sayin;

“Michty me min we dinna hae sic a thing as a phone!”

The woman butted in though, sayin the fairm up at Dirumdreich hid yin but there'd be nae wye I'd be able tae wun up that road this nicht.

Jist aboot then I heard fitsteps comin up the stairs and twa lads came intae the room. Een wiz a gye big lad and hid tae joock his heed doon as he came throwe the door; the ither lad wiz much smaaer. They smiled at ma and came ower tae the fire. Baith o them were dressed much like the aal man apairt fae each weerin a wastcoat but

the same kind o sark athoot a collar.

The woman drew up a couple o timmer seats and tellt them tae sit doon and that supper widna be lang. The aal man made up mair toddies for us aa and soon we were pittin them back. The big lad wiz Wully Tyler and he vrocht up at the fairm o Dirumdreich as cattlie and the ither lad wint by the name o Gordon Strachin, an he wiz the orraman at the same place. They must've bade here though for it wiz obvious they'd nae came in fae ootside. And that's how it wiz, for baith o them hid a room doon the stairs and got fed wi the aal man an his dochter. The dochter Bunty Sangster and her faither Robbie vrocht aboot the aal farmtoon keepin the place in order for the faimily up at Dirumdreich.

Bunty wiz at the big pot hingin abeen the fire that I'd nivver noticed and wi a cloot wuppit aboot the hoop handle she cairried it ower tae a big table set oot at the ither eyne o the room.

"Come on noo lads let the fusky be for a fylie it's time for aitin!"

Aabody wint ower tae the table includin me an teen a seat. I wiz pitten tae the opposite eyne o the table and Bunty tellt ma that that place wiz always set jist in case o an unexpected visitor. And michty, I wiz fairly the unexpected visitor this nicht.

Gordon did a strange thing fin Bunty spoke aboot unexpected visitors. He started tae rub his haans thegither and said "Caal caal hannies an feeties in the Bogies o Ardallie!"

Bunty said;

"Wheesht min, Dinna start that eynoo!"

Gordon hung his heed at this but seen smiled again fin Bunty

handed him a big bowliefae o fine broth then een tae me. I wiz aboot tae get stuck in fin I noticed the aal man lookin at ma so I put the speen doon. Aifster aabody hid a bowl in front o them, the aal man smilin said that as I wiz the unexpected visitor might be I'd say grace?

Noo in aa ma life I'd only once heard it fin a wifie that I wiz vrochtin for in Gamrie hid made us wyte afore aitin oor denner then said grace. And for the love o ma I couldna mind foo it wint. I kent aabody wiz awytin ma so the only grace I kent wiz fae Burns;

*“Some hae mait an canna ate some hae mait that want it,
but we hae mait an we maun ate an tae the Lord be thankit!”*

Aabody clapped an Robbie shouted,

“Weel said min! Weel said.”

Aifster a really fine supper o broth, tatties, meally jeemie and kail we aa returned tae the fire. Bunty served us aa a joog o tay and buttered scones wi hame made cheese an richt fine it wiz ana.

Michty it wiz rare an cosy sittin at the fire and the sound o the storm raging ootside. Robbie said the power line wiz doon and threw mair sticks ontae the fire tae licht up the proceedins and tellt Bunty tae turn the lampy doon a bittie. Aabody seemed tae be kinichted wi this and there wiz the scrapin o cheers being moved nearer tae the fire.

Lichtin his pipe Robbie lookit at me an aifster a fyowe puffs he'd her gyan tae his satisfaction an tapped oot the taper at the side o the fire.

“Weel Sanners!” says he “Div ye believe in ghosts?”

Nivver in aa ma life haein seen sic a thing I didna really ken

foo tae answer that een so I thocht it micht be better tae gee a diplomatic kind o answer and said;

“Well I’ve nivver seen a ghost but there are mair things in Heaven an earth than the likes o me wid ken!”

Robbie got a richt laach at my answer an slapped his ain knee.

“That wiz a crackin answer Sanners an I’m thinkin ye should gyang intae the politics, bein a pinter yer waisted min!”

Aabody got a laach at that.

Wully Tyler made tae licht his pipe and that’s fin I saw that his richt haan wiz wantin three o the fingers and as he fichered wi the pipe I could see that he’d only his index finger an thoom. He noticed me lookin and removin the pipe fae his moo said huddin up the haan said.

“Jerry bullet!” Then cairried on ficherin wi his pipe.

Noo Wully wiz aboot the ages o masel, aboot his mid twenties maybe at a push thirty, so there’s nae wye he wiz aal enough tae hae focht in the war. Tae hiv deen that he’d need tae be intae his forties at the very least. I wiz aboot tae say that but Robbie spoke jist then an teen ma thochts awa fae Wully.

“Well fit div ye think aboot listenin tae ghost stories?”

Now I quite like a gweed ghost story and that’s fit I tellt Robbie. His een lichted at this an tellt ma that I wiz in luck because seein it’s Burns’ nicht they ayee tellt ghost stories aroon the hearth steen.

“Right. Faa’s gyan tae tell the first een?” speired Robbie.

At this Wully Tyler teen oot his watch fae his wastcoat pouch and steed up sayin;

“I’m awa up tae see tae the beasts!”

Gordon made tae rise but Wully put a haan ontae his shooder sayin;

“Bide faar ye are min an listen tae the story I winna be lang!” I could see fear cross Wullie’s een as he said this, or maybe I jist imagined it? But I could’ve swore but for a second aabody’s een teen on the same look.

As Wully left, Robbie repeated;

“Come on noo, faa’s gyan tae tell the first story?”

He lookit aroon the company tae see faa it wid be but aabody in ae voice said;

“You first Robbie, you’re the best storyteller!”

Robbie smiled an nodded his heed sayin;

“Well I’m nae sure aboot the best but as it is I div hae a gweed wee story tae tell that micht tak yer attention.”

He laached and laid his pipe doon on the bink o the fire. His quine Bunty made a fuss roon him handin ower a cup o tay and a bit cheese. Aifterhins she handed each o’s a cuppy and a lump o cheese then settled hersel doon on the airm o her fadder’s cheer, folded her haans ontae her lap an awyted him tae begin.

The storm wiz blawin weel ootside and the aal windae frame rattled as each gust tried tae wun in on us. But it made the atmosphere aa the better for a ghost story. Rab made a comment aboot it sayin;

“Gweed sakes that’s a nicht nae fit for man nor beast!” He lookit ower at me; “Aye Sanners it wiz jist as weel ye made it here loon, ye wid’ve smoored oot intae that!”

Aabody lookit affa sad at this and Gordon started rubbin his

haans eence mair;

“Caal caal hannies an feeties in the Boggies o Ardallie!”

He'd a strange haunted look ontae his face as if visualisin something atween yestreen an the morn. He made tae say it again but Bunty interrupted by offerin him anither bittie cheese. She looked scared hersel though and I could see she wiz disturbed by Gordon's words for some reason. Robbie made a laach an tellt Gordon tae behave himsel but I could see that it bothered him ana.

“Richt!” said Robbie, “Is aabody settled? Weel the story I'm aboot tae tell ye happened tae a man I kent many years ago!”

He gid Bunty a poke and laachin said;

“Lang afore this een became the bane o ma life!”

Bunty gave him a shove;

“Awa ye go min,” she said wi a chuckle, “I'm nae that bad.”

“Weel noo faar wiz aa? Oh aye.” Robbie gid on wi his story: *“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 aboot 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.

Onywye 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

onywye on this God's earth that he'd manage this yoking? Wi a weary fit Donald 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 heid intae Donald's bosie 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. Aifster a fylie he got tae his feet wi a gye chavie an says tae Paddy "Come aal pal we'd best get yokit!"

Reluctantly Paddy shooched tae his feet an hirpled alang wi Donald."

Robbie stoppit spikkin an looked up at Bunty an gave her a powk.

"Hud aff fae greetin an mak up mair toddy for the loons here!"

I saw Bunty dicht her een, “Awa min I wisna greetin ava it wiz

only that fool reek fae yer pipe got intae ma een.”

An wi that, Robbie laached, “Aa richt ma quine I’ll blaw it up the lum tae please ye!” nae believin a word fae her.

In nae time we’d aa gotten a bowiefae o fine toddy an Bunty wi her bonny smile teen up her seat on the airm o Robbie’s cheer eence mair.

“Richt noo faar aboot wiz aa? Och aye!” says Robbie pickin up the tale eence mair.

“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 teen oot their denner. A corted o breid each an a lump o kebbach. He haavered the cheese an breid 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 scratteed 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 lay there owernicht. 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 sochendeen 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 farrer 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 chaye 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 faar 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 telecscope 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 Donald kenneled it up tae calm himsel doon an gie him a bittie time tae think."

Robbie takin the opportunity ana, stopped spikkin an seen hid his ain pipe kennled as weel afore cairryin on.

"Well noo Donald sat there for a fair meenty, thinkin aboot the ongyans. He'd decided he'd jist leave the telescope faar 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 yowies he'd avoid the peer's hoose an Paddy wid avoid the bullet.

Canny kind, he picket up the telescope an tried it again but in a different wye jist tae prove something tae himself. He focused on the nearest yowie then 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 Donald 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 michty it saved him an Paddy a lot o traachlin aboot. Of coarse 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.

Onywyne 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 foreeneen. Donald protested aboot 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 aboot 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 might be broken in body but nae in 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 tae the mockin laachter o the Reed Bull.

On the road a bittie he stoppit an laid Paddy doon an checked oot faar 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 hard.

Aifster aboot an oor's time passin and him rubbin Paddy's chest he seemed tae get a bittie in better settle 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."

Robbie stopped tae licht his pipe again and I could see Bunty wiz greetin, an tae my surprise so wiz Gordon. I'd lang suspected that he wisna richt poor laddie, for he'd a couple o times during the story rubbed his haans thegither and said the strange wee rhyme; 'Caal caal hannies an feeties in the boggies o Ardallie!'

Bunty tellt him tae be quate at that times but I'd seen the sadness in her een, aye and a touch o fear.

"Weel no! Faar aboot wiz a?" says Robbie clearing his thrapple, "Oh aye!"

"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 aboot 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 thocht Donald tae himsel.

Jist as he feenished deein this he saw the shada at the left o the lense again an quickly focused ontae it but this time he could see it wiz a woman weerin a reed cloak. She spoke tae him, for he'd teen her inaboot wi the glaiss as he'd been deein wi the yowies meeits 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 an cloak couldna hide.

"Aye Donald an Paddy baith o ye wid be in a gye pickle I'd be thinkin?" she said.

At this Paddy got tae his feet an lickit Donald's face then started tae loup aboot the wye he used tae afore aal age teen a hud. Donald, the woman forgotten, held a work wi Paddy and the tears

fleelin 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 an says;

"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 aboot wi excitement they walked intae the forivver alang 'The Byway of Dreams!'"

Bunty let the tears flow an started sabbin coverin her face wi her haans. Robbie gave her a poke an teasingly said;

"Ye canna say it's the rik fae ma pipe noo for it's oot!"

Gordon wiz much the same and I must admit my ain een gave a prickle or twa at this endin.

Bunty composed hersel sayin tae her father;

"How could a telescope tak yowies aff a hill for gweed's sake min?"

I noticed her avoidin ony mention o Donald and Paddy though. She believed the story hook line an sinker, her tear stained een proved that.

I wiz really enjoyin sittin at the fire wi sic gweed company, my belly full o fine mait an mair than twa'r three toddies intae ma an listenin tae sic a weel tellt story. I could still hear the storm rattlin the windae ootside but it seemed so far awa as if tae be lost in the crackle o the fire and my bein lost tae the moment.

Aifter a meenit or twa Robbie said;

"Aricht faa's gyan tae tell the next story?"

He lookit at me but I shook ma heed sayin I didna ken ony gweed stories. He nodded his heed an smiled sadly at ma;

“Aye ye will though Sanners aifter this nicht ye will, mark my words!”

Bunty butted in.

“I’ve a richt story!”

Then Gordon began rubbin his haans an started sayin the wee rhyme but Bunty stoppit him.

“Hud yer wheesht Gordon! Jist let me tell my story then it’ll be your turn.”

Gordon hung his heed at this but I caught Robbie an Bunty exchange glances and I didna miss the fear in them.

Bunty made hersel comfortable an lookit roon us aa tae mak sure she hid oor attention. Aifter she wiz pleased we were aa peyin heed tae her an that Gordon wiz oot o his sulks she began.

“Weel I wiz in the service o Doctor Webster and his wife at New Deer. Ye might ken the hoose it’s jist up fae aal kirk in the toon? Onywye I’d started tae vrocht there in the Mey term, jist deein general duties. They werena demandin fowk and apairt fae a fyowe freens roon noo an en my work wiz pretty mundane. Jist cleanin, cookin, washin an lookin aifter the haaf dizzen chuckins. The doctor’s wife did her ain shoppin so I’d neen o that tae dee. They’d electric lichts so I’d nae lamps tae full and clean an apart fae takkin in coal for the fire I’d gotten masel a gweed sit doon as far as service wiz concerned.

Onywye it wiz aboot the month o November as the nichts came in that I first noticed something strange. The first fyowe times I’d

seen this I didna think muckle aboot it.

Noo Doctor Webster's hoose backed ontae fields. There's a lane rins between the aal kirk an the hoose an as far as I could see it jist led tae the park. Onywyne the first time I saw it I wiz oot shuttin the hens in for the nicht fin I saw a lassie makin her wye doon the lane.

I said "Aye aye!" tae her but she nivver let on she heard ma.

Neen put oot I closed up the hennies then checked the gate wiz richt tee.

I teen a glance doon the lane tae see faar aboot the deemy hid geen but nae signs o her could I mak oot? Micht be there's a crafty doon there that I didna ken aboot? This wint on for a fyowe nichts an the illfashions got the better o ma so I'd nithing adee but tae hae a walk doon the lane neist day in daylight.

The lane led ontae a puckle yards faar fowk planted kail, cabbages an sic like. After that the track headed doon by a copse o trees then peetered oot at the entrance tae some parks. There wisna ony signs o hooses o ony kind.

Mair than a bittie puzzled I made my wye back thinkin aa the while faar that deemie could be gyan till in the late forenicht? Nae matter, that nicht fin I gid oot tae shut in the hennies I put my cwite on wi the full intention o follyin the deemie this time if she put in an appearance. But na na, she didna show that nicht nor for a puckle nichts aifter.

It wisna till aboot the Feersday o the next wik I saw her eence mair. I spoke till her again expectin tae be ignored as usual but this time she looked at ma, she nivver spoke but she fairly lookit at ma. An

fin she did for some reason or ither, I felt the hairs on the back o ma neck birrs. Her face wiz snow white and her een were like black holes, it lookit tae me in the shadas that she tried tae spik but couldnae.

She cairried on waakin doon the lane so I followed her. She wiz fair knypin on so it teen me a minty tae catch up an keep her in view. Doon past the yards she wint and I could see she wiz headin towards the copse o trees. I lost her tae sicht there because doon here the shadas were much deeper. I stood still an slowly lookit aboot but nae a sign o her could I see. Faa wiz she an faar wiz she gan?

I wiz aboot tae wun ma wye hame fin I saw a movement at the side o the trees an there she wiz staanin lookin ower at ma. She then started tae pint doon at her feet ower and ower again then slowly she disappeared fae sicht. I teen tae ma heels at this as if the jookles o hell were ahin ma an got back tae the hoose in an affa sotter o swytle an fear.

By gweed luck Doctor Webster wiz gan in the back gate at the same time. He'd me intae the hoose in nae time poorin whisky doon ma thrapple. He said later he saw I wiz in a state o complete shock and the only thing he hid tae shock ma hert back intae a normal rhythm wiz whisky. I did manage tae tell him fit I'd seen eventually and he thocht I'd been imagining things. Mrs Webster though, now doon tae find oot wiz gan on, came oot ontae my side. She said that she'd also seen that lassie walk by mony's the time but hid nivver thocht onything aboot it?"

Bunty hid a quick look roon us aa afore she cairried on.

"The neist day we aa wint doon tae faar I'd seen the lassie

stop the nicht afore but of coarse there wisna onything tae see. Doctor Webster tellt me tae rin up tae the hoose for a shovel but I didna need tae bother for I met in wi an aal lad makkin his wye doon tae the yards wi a shovel intae his haan. In nae time he'd a scrape oot o the grun fin Doctor Webster tellt him tae stop. He bent doon an picked up fit lookit like a wee bit o stick. Aifster lookin at it a minty doctor Webster turned tae me an tellt ma I'd tae gyang up for the policeman for we'd jist uncovered human remains.

It turned oot the lassie hid been murdered an beeriet there aboot a haaf century afore. She'd been the dochter o the local soutar an hid geen missing athoot trace. An engraved locket wi her name wiz still roon her neck. At the time fowk said she'd run awa wi the lad she used tae ayee meet wi doon at the copse. The police thocht he'd killed her an beeriet her afore rinnin awa fae the district. But of course they couldna really be sure if it wiz him that did it or no."

Bunty said, "Now fit did ye think o that yin?"

Robbie laached an tellt her she wiz getting as gweed as her aal man at tellin a tale.

She smiled shyly at this as she said;

"Awa min faa can tell a better story than the best story teller like yersel?"

But I could see she wiz fair kinichted wi the compliment neentheless. Gordon then spoke and that seemed tae soor the mood a bittie. I wisna sure but I thocht I saw fear pass ower Bunty an Robbie's faces then I saw sadness in them fin they glanced at me.

Robbie nodded his heed sayin;

"Aaricht Gordon but let's hae anither toddy afore ye start."

Aifterhins Gordon started his story. He spoiled it a wee bittie fin he started in fit he thought wiz a mysterious voice but seen started speakin normal.

"I wiz fee'd at the Hash o Newbiggins at the ither side o Meedlick. There'd been an affa storm on the grun an we'd heen an gye job keepin the beasts fed ower the last puckle wikkis. An affa lot o placies hid been cut aff wi the storm but noo wi the roads getting opened things were comin back tae normal. I wiz makkin ma wye hame fae Meedlick ae nicht aboot this time wi a puckle eerins for ma mither.

I decided I best be takkin the shortcut hame by Ardallie an that's fin I saw a wee lichty in ma path. It wiz blue in colour an neen bigger norr a canngle flame. It danced aboot this wye an that, first gyan awa fae ma then wunnin back at ma. It did this a puckle times. I didna ken then fit it wiz but I began tae get a wee bit feart by noo."

Gordon stoppit an started tae rub his haans thegither an lookit roon us aa wi a look o horror in his een.

"It's aaricht Gordon yer deein fine min, ye hiv tae feenish yer story for us," Robbie said softly.

Gordon nodded at this but the fear intae his een got waar. I noticed a similar look in Robbie an Bunty's een ana as the fear began tae work ontae them. Gordon stoppit rubbin his haans an cairried on wi his tale.

"Well the lichty made its wye doon the road tae ma left and set tae dancin abeen the wee cotter hoosie at the Boggies then came back the wye o ma afore deein this again. It seemed tae me it wanted tae tak ma tae the wee cootar hoosie for some reason? An may God

*forgee ma but instead o gyan the wye it wanted I teen tae ma heels.
By the time I wun hame aabody wiz bedded so it wisna till the next
mornin I got tae tell ma mither fit I'd seen the nicht afore. Oh me,
please forgee ma!"*

Gordon lookit aroon us eence mair as if we could forgive him for something. His een were wild an he started tae rubb his haans thegither again but athoot the wee rhyme this time. He settled a bit afore gyan on.

*"My mither tellt ma that I'd seen the 'Death Cannel' warnin
ma something affa bad wiz happenin tae somebody. She said I
should've wint faar it led tae see fit wiz wrang!"*

He started tae sob at this an Bunty rose and crossed tae comfort him. She'd fear in her een and I saw Robbie lookin at the clock and hurriedly said tae Gordon.

"Come on Gordon it's comin up time, so hash on wi yer story!"

Composin himself, he tellt us that later that day him an his father hid wint tae the bogs tae check oot aabody wiz aaricht.

*"But by the time they got there aa they found wiz the corp o a
lassie an her four wee bairnies faa'd aa deet o hunger and caal. The
doctor said that een o the youngest bairns hid been the last tae dee a
fyowe oors afore."*

The tears were fleein fae Gordon's een as he said;

*"I could've saved the peer bairnie's life if I hidna teen tae ma
heels!"*

Bunty wiz in the same state, sobbin fit tae brak her hert.

Gordon started rubbin his haans;

"Caal caal are the haanies an feeties in the Boggies o Ardallie!" ower and ower again.

Robbie wiz lookin at the clock an there wiz pure terror intae his een as he followed the haan comin up tae the oor o ten.

A chap come tae the door that made aabody jump and I could feel a caal breeze come up the stairs as fairver it wiz let themsels in.

I could hear the thumpin o beets knockin aff the snaa then the feet makkin their wye up the stair. Bunty teen Gordon's haan an tried tae sooth him a bittie.

The door opened and in came Wully Tyler that I'd met earlier. He wiz in a gye state wi his face pinched grey wi the caal. Afore sayin onything he made his wye tae the fire for some heat. Bunty leavin Gordon stannin wi the look o pure terror on his face made up a big toddy for Wully faa teen it gratefully and dooned it in a oner.

Clearin his thrapple an dichtin his moo wi the back o his wounded haan, he tellt Robbie that aa the beasts were oot. He said they'd eether get smoored in the storm or else gyang ower the cliffs intae the sea if they didna get them back inside.

Robbie glanced at Bunty an Gordon and I could noo see the same terror ontae his face. Wully didna seem tae see the fear his entrance hid caused an cairried on heatin himsel at the fire.

Robbie, Bunty and Gordon wint for their cwites. I made tae gyang wi them ana but Robbie put a haan ontae ma shooder sayin;

"Na na Sanners you canna come wi us, ye'd jist get lost!" Wi a quick look aroon at aabody he carried on, "We ken the area, you dinna. Onywye I think ye've seen enough snaa for this nicht?"

Turnin tae Bunty he said, "Gie him a blanket," and pyntin tae

the back o the room says tae me, “Sleep ower there on the deece.”

He pointed at fit tae me looked for aa the world like an aal kirk pew. Bunty busied hersel getting me a blanket fae a big press an heistin ma tae the deece. She spread the blanket for me tae lie on an gid ma a pill a sayin;

“Here noo ye should be warm enough there till we wun back.”

The fear hidna left her een but afore she followed aabody doon the stairs she steed for a minty lookin at ma as the saddest look I’d ivver in aa ma life seen passed ower her face. She turned awa an as she left she put the lamp doon low.

I must’ve fell asleep wi the sound o the storm raging ootside and waakened by the sound o a heavy diesel engine on full revs roarin ootside the windae. I come tee wi a bit o a headache and an affa muchty smell in ma nose.

Fin I lookit aboot ma I’d tae think faar aboot I wiz. The room wiz the same but athing else wiz different. Instead o the furnishings fae the nicht afore aa I could see apart fae the odd bit o furniture wiz rowies o pycket weir an piles o timmer posts. I made tae rise fae the deece an found the blanket fell tae bits as I arose. I choked a bittie ontae the muchty styoo comin fae aff it. At the fireplace though I could see my jaicket an biler suit Bunty hid hung there tae dry. My beets were there ana so I quickly pulled them on.

Grabbin ma jaicket and biler suit I made for the door an aifter a fair yoke got it haafwyes open. I widnae be getting oot that wye for the stair wiz stappit almost tae the reef wi lengths o timmer. Makin my wye tae the windae instead I tried chappin tae get the attention o faivver wiz at the tractor.

Although I did see the man noo an then as he wiz attachin a bit o machinery tae the hineyne o the tractor there wisna onywyne he'd hear ma wi aa that din gyan on so I bowffed the windae peen oot. Although he couldna hear ma he seen teen notice o a shoor o broken glass fleein aboot.

He lookit up at ma and I could see him mouth something then shakin his heed he wint intae the cab a shut the engine doon.

“Fit the bliddy hell are ye deein in there min?”

Christ he lookit gye angry an wiz swearin like a trooper at ma. I tellt him tae calm doon an help ma get oot, we could spik aboot the foo's an fyes aifter. I managed tae get the boddom sash o the windae oot athoot deein ony mair damage and got oot ontae the reef o the tractor's cab an syne ontae the grun.

He started eence mair ontae ma but I tellt him tae hing fire an let me explain. Onywyne I started tae tell him aboot my van brakin doon in the snaa and I saw a puzzled look come intae his face as he lookit aroon him. I could see fine fit he wiz lookin at.

There wisna one flake o snaa on the grun.

In aa the panic tae get oot o the buildin I'd nae noticed that till noo. Onywyne I tellt him fit hid happened and how I got intae the building. He wint ower tae check the door tae see if somehow I'd managed tae wun in but the roosty lock proved I hidna got in that wye.

There wiz a doonstairs windae tae the left o the door but it wiz covered in chuckin weir an blue fertiliser bags so I hidna got in that wye. Scratin his heed he says tae me that I'd better come up tae the fairm wi him an tell his aal man fit I'd tellt him.

I wiz freezin o caal an shiverin so I got intae the cab an wint wi him tae see his father. I wiz teen intae the kitchen, an the fine smell o cookin an the heat wiz like heaven. The aal man bid ma sit at the table while his wife poored me a big joog o tay fussin aboot ma, sayin I lookit as if I could dee wi een.

Onywye I tellt the aal fairmer the whole story an aifter I feenished he tellt his loon tae gyang throwe tae the gweed room and get the group photae fae aff the waa. I wiz then handed the photae.

I could see richt awa Robbie, Bunty, Gordon an Wully and pintaed them oot. Of course I said they lookit aaler than in that photae for it must've been teen a fyowe years afore I'd met them last nicht. The aal fairmer sat back an lookit at his wife an loon. I could see his face hid lost a fair bit o colour.

“O michty me!” wiz aa he could say.

Risin fae the table he left the room and his wife teen the opportunity tae pit a plate o ham an eggs in front o ma.

The fairmer wiz awa for a fair minty so I got stuck intae my braakfast and jist feenished fin he returned cairryin a wee cardboard box. Fae it he teen some aal yella newspaper clippins an showed ma something that made the hairs ontae the back o ma neck birss up. It wiz fae the Banffie for January 1927.

The headline read: ‘Four tragic deaths on Burns’ Night!’

It then wint ontae explain that the four folk hid died in the storm while trying to save cattle that had broken loose. It wint on tae name Robbie an Bunty Sangster, Gordon Strachin an Wully Tyler. It looked like Robbie hid been richt enough fin he'd said I'd be believin in ghosts afore the nicht wiz oot!

Tales fae Dr Festing Makadoork's case book:
The Bliddy Sowens!

Aal Tammar jist wisna keepin ower weel, jist feelin gye fyaachy aboot the kite fylies. He wiz bangin sodium bicarbonate doon his thrapple at an affa rate. Bettsy his wife wiz getting gye worried aboot him, an priggit wi Tammar tae gyan an see the doctor. But the thrown aal bugger that he wiz ayee pitten it aff, pittin it aff till the hinner eyne it wiz Bettsy hersel that teen the bull by the horns an wint tae see the doctor hersel.

Doctor Makadoork listened tae fit Bettsy wiz tellin him, noddin his heed here an there an clarifyin a pynt noo an then. He promised her that he'd hae a looky in by the morn on his rounds.

Sure enough, true tae his word, Dr Makadoork came inaboot neist day. Brusque in manner, he waikit in athoot announcement shoutin;

“Far aboot’s the aal bugger?” an near teen the heed aff o Tammar wi the scullery door.

Tammar loupit clear o the swingin door wi an “Aliss ye hooer!” wi the shock and skailin a coggiefae o sowans he'd been awa tae ait for braakfast.

Dr Makadoork neen pit oot nor carin that he'd near fleggit his patient intae an early kirkin says;

“Michty min fit the hell were ye deein ahin the door like that for?”

Nae wytin for a reply, he jist mairched intae the middle o the

scullery steppin throwe the skailed sowans an trailin them across the flagged fleer athoot a care. He slammed his doctor's bag ontae the table near pittin the twa'r three dishes ontae it in the air.

Turnin tae the still shocked Tammar he grumpit, "Richt noo!
Fit ails ye min?"

Tammar fair teen aback an wrang fittid shook his heed and managed in a reedy voice replied;

"Nithing."

Aa but Dr Makadoork wisna haein ony o this.

"Na na min, come on noo that's nae fit I've been hearin!" Wi that he got Tammar tae cast his sark and seemit an even geein him a haan fin his gallusses got in a redd up.

He powked at his puddins makin Tammar yelp noo an then. He listened tae his lungs afore lookin intae his lugs and doon his thrapple. Jist as he feenished Bettsy came in fae feedin the hennies.

"Oh Dr Makadoork yer here?" says she wi a quick dicht o her clyse tae get rid o the styowe aboot her fae the henhouse.

"Wid ye be wantin a cuppy o tay doctor?"

Dr Makadoork jist grumped sayin, "Na na I hinna the time!"

Lookin ower at Tammar ficherin wi his seemit an sark says;

"There's nithing that I can find wrang wi the aal bugger apart fae bein a bit waan an pale aboot the jaws!"

He speired at Bettsy fit he ait an wiz fair teen aback fin she tellt him that he only ait sowans. He'd them for braakfast, denner an supper ilka day an maybe a plate o birdie's eenies on the Sabbath.

He glowered at Tammar, faa hid tellt him he teen nithing but gweed wholesome mait. Tammar's een wint doon tae the flooer in

bein caught oot in a lee.

Doctor Makadoork grummpit again sayin, “A man body canna live on sowans min! they’re little better nor gruel!”

Snappin his case shut the doctor tellt Bettsy tae gie him plenty animal food tae get his system back up afore the silly aal bugger draps deed wi malnutrition. Wi that he made for the door squelching throwe the skailed sowans. Ower his shooder he shouted;

“I’ll come in past in a fortnicht!” Then in a lower voice, “Bliddy sowans!”

A fortnicht later Dr Makadoork came in by and got a bit o a shock fin he saw Tammar sittin by the fire jist a shada o himsel an lookin gye peely wally aboot the gills. The doctor frowned an speired at Bettsy foo he wiz getting on aitin amimal food? Tammar gave a shudder an Bettsy pulled a face.

“Well he manages awa on the chappit neeps an fylies wi the linseed ile cake but ae me he jist canna be deein wi the strae, Doctor!”

Catty.

Mabel pottered aboot in the gairden clearin een o the vegetable beds. It hid been a gye while since she got the chance tae come intae her beloved gairden. Apart fae the odd cut o the greenie she'd hardly been near it ava.

Her poor mither hid teen up maist o her time and the last months hid been awful as the dementia teen a hud o her. Her mither hidna been in the best o health for a lot o years but Mabel hid managed tae work at the cooncil offices and look aifter her ana but nae once the dementia hid started.

Her mither hid been found wanderin aboot the toon a couple o times and Mabel hid teen early retirement tae look aifter her. In so deein she'd lost a lot o her pension package but she'd loved her mither dearly an widna see her gyan intae a home.

The church bell struck ten so wi a wee groan Mabel straachtened hersel up fae the veggi bed and made her wye intae the hoose, first takin aff her dubby beets and pittin on her slippers at the wee porch at the back door.

Mabel didna like gyan intae the kitchen noo that her mither wiz awa, she ayee expected tae see her sittin on her cheer at the side o the fire.

The kitchen wiz aal farrent wi sclate flag on the fleer at the lum waa wiz the big Aga stove that keepit the room as warm as a pie and the reason they'd spent maist o their time in the kitchen, for there wisna ony ither form o heat in the hoose. Apart that is fae a two bar

electric heater in fit hid been her mither's bedroom and of course the grate in the gweedroom that wiz nivver used these days.

Mabel fulled the kettle an switched it on then gyan tae the press aside the windae she teen oot her 'special' treat for mornin fly, a jar o Nescafe coffee. She drank fae a china mug nae een o yon horrible big heavy joogs that fowk drank fae noo-a-days. She sat doon at the aal deal table wi her steamin joog o coffee and opened the cutlery drawer in the table and teen oot her ither 'special' treat, a packet o fags. This wiz the only fag she smoked, she'd hae een at ten o'clock ivvery mornin alang wi her one cup o coffee. She sat back wi a sigh and takin a guilty glance at her mither's cheer, lichted her fag. Mabel's mither hid been that against smokin so she'd ayee wint outside tae hae a fag.

The room hid a big settle against ae waa, an aal leather thing that hid definitely seen better days but it wiz comfy an nae too far fae the tv on the wee table. She'd kent this room nearly aa her days and fin her parents were here it hid been fulled wi laughter.

Her ee shifted tae the mantle piece abeen the Aga tae the photo o her father an mither's waddin day an a gweed lookin couple they were ana. Dad in his Gordon Highlander's uniform wi his medals on his breest an his sergeants' stripes, her mither smilin and lookin up at him wi love in her een. That'd been jist aifter the Great War. Mabel hid been born in 1923. It wiz soon aifter that they'd moved intae this hoose, that's siventy years ago.

Mabel gave anither sigh and looked at the ither photo, showin a bonny lassie in her early twenties. Mabel wiz far mair critical o this photo though thinkin that the lassie in it wiz bonny enough but her

nose didna seem richt and though she'd a bonny smile it wiz spoiled wi her showin ower muckle o her gums abeen her teeth. But sayin that she'd hid a fyowe suitors in her day an mair than eence she'd been offered the chance tae mairry.

Mabel gave another sigh and wint tae the sink wi her cup an gave it a sweet. She'd rejected the offers though. Her father hid teen affa ill wi his heart and hid left his job wi the railway. Mabel then mair or less became the breadwinner at that time. Eventually her father died and the doctor said his hert wiz enlarged. He'd tellt her that a lot o men that hid focht in the Great War teen this type o hert complaint and her father haein been a piper also added tae that. Her mither nivver in the best o health hid teen a turn for the worse and wiz nivver the same aifter her husband died.

Mabel hid managed though and worked awa at the cooncil eventually reachin the rank o Registrar. She'd loved her job at the cooncil and hid set up a filing system second tae none, which wiz her pride and joy. But as things do in life, they change and the new computers came on the go. Younger fowk used them and eventually her card index system wiz relegated tae history. It wiz aboot that time that her mither started showin the signs o dementia. The cooncil hid wanted tae mak staff cuts, so she'd teen early retirement.

She wint back tae her vegetable bed and wiz soon lost tae fit she wiz deein. Aboot half eleven she'd been thinkin on pittin on a tattie for denner fin she noticed movement aneath the big elder bush. Standin up wi a groan Mabel crossed tae it and hid a look. At first she couldna see onything amongst the last year's growth until she moved some o the twigs aside. That's fin she saw the bonny blue ee lookin at

her.

“Oh me, peer wee catty!”

She put her haan in tae touch it but the cat hissed at her and backed aff. Mabel saw that its richt ee wiz a mess o scab and its luggie on the same side wiz nearly aff.

She tried athing tae get it tae come tae her but it jist hissed an tried tae clook her. She spoke quietly till it tae see if that wid work but it held aff still lookin at her wi the bonny blue ee.

She wint intae the hoose and got a saucer o milk and put it aneath the bush then she moved awa an sat on the greenie wi the saucer o milk in sicht.

Aifter a good while the cat came towards it an started tae sup. She could see the cat wiz in a gye mess, an saw livid weepin cuts aboot its neck as weel as the festered ee an damaged luggie.

Mabel muttered, “Oh ye peer wee thingie!”

It looked like somebody’s pet cat that hid wint feral. Mabel didna ken muckle aboot cats but saw that it hid marlled colours and by the size o’t must be male.

Ower the next fyowe days Mabel fed the cat and as she did it seemed tae get a wee bittie tamer and came as far as the back porch tae get fed. But still it widna let her touch it and jist hissed at her if she tried.

In the mornings she’d ging oot and shout, “Catty! Come on dearie!” and it wid come fae ablow the bush.

She decided tae caa it ‘Catty’ because it seemed tae answer tae that. Eventually ‘Catty’ started tae come intae the hoose and loved tae sit on the flagsteens ablow the Aga.

Mabel got tae touch it noo and wiz even alloed tae wash its wounds wi saaty water tae clean them. The festered ee wiz her main concern but aifter a lot o saaty water and solutions o cider vinegar the infection got better. The ee wiz blinded though and instead o the bonny blue o the good yin it wiz milky and sair lookin.

“Oh ma peer wee Catty,” she’d mutter as she tended its wounds.

As the weeks passed Catty wid let Mabel pet him in front o the Aga but wid nivver come ont ae her knee.

Mabel loved tae watch her films on the vhs video. She’d got it for her mither and her tae watch, baith o them loved Doris Day films an mony’s the nicht they spent watchin them. One film though wiz Mabel’s favourite. ‘They Carved Her Name With Pride,’ a true story aboot a lassie in the S.O.E. that wint tae the war in occupied Europe and wiz captured by the Gestapo. The actress wiz Virginia Mackenna and she fairly made a good job o the film. Fin Mabel watched it she’d usually end up greetin because it wiz so sad.

Ae nicht she sat watchin it and as usual at the end she started greetin. She saw Catty lookin up at her fae the fleer wi the one blue ee and aifter a minty it shoochled its wye ower tae the settee and came up intae her bosie and put ae big paw ont ae her cheek as if sayin ‘It’s gan tae be fine.’ Aifter that Catty spent nearly ivery nicht in her bosie and did the same thing wi his paw finivver she graat at that film.

The months wint by and in that time her and Catty became inseparable. Finivver she wiz in the gairden Catty wid lie as close tae her as possible an a fyowe times she nearly stood ont ae him.

At the back o her gairden a block o fower pensioner's hooses backed ontae it. There wiz a widden fence on tap o the dyke because the hooses were higher up than Mabel's gairden. The aal fowk hid left tae gang intae sheltered housing and the cooncil hid began pittin younger fowk intae the hooses.

The young couple that bade in the hoose directly ahin Mabel's were affa fine. They'd twa bairns; the loon Michael wiz four and the wee lassie Greta seven. She often spoke tae their mither ower the fence and wid ayee speir for the bairns. Mabel wid gie them birthday cards wi a fiver in it and the same at Christmas alang wi a selection box each. The man hid a job at a local hotel workin makin braakfasts so he'd an early start ilka mornin.

Mabel hid often thocht o inviting them in for supper some nicht but ayee kept pittin it aff because she wiz sic a private person. That mornin though the lassie hid tellt her they were moving awa doon the Arbroath wye because her man hid landed a good job in yin o the fancy hotels doon there. That wikeyne they moved but nae afore Mabel getting their new address and geein the bairns a penny for the journey.

Sadly that wiz the last real peace Mabel wid iver ken. The next tenant wiz a single man and in nae time he'd the loud music on the go and drinkin pals inabout makin a noise tae aa oors.

Fin Mabel wint oot in the mornins she'd find empty beer tins and loads o tabbies in her gairden. Aften she'd hear folk rinnin throwe her back yard as the new lads mates used her gairden as a short cut at nicht.

Mabel thocht o gyan tae the police or maybe the cooncil aboot

this but decided she'd hae a word wi the new lad aboot the noise and rubbish thrown intae her gairden. She did get tae speak tae him but for aa the gweed o't and the moothfae o abuse Mabel hid jist walked awa, shakkin her heed mutterin despairingly, "Nae point!"

Aa that she'd achieved wiz tae enrage him and things got an affa lot worse aifter that. If she'd keepit quate an said nithing, things micht've worked awa but noo she'd shown her heed abeen the parapet and ended up a real target for him and his mates.

She could hardly get intae her gairden ava noo for the abuse and ilka mornin her greenie wiz littered wi empty tins and bottles. Because they drank aa nicht she could get intae her gairden early in the mornin. She'd use the time tae clear up the mess.

She started tae find wee squares o tin foil that looked as though they'd been burned. She'd shown yin tae the man at the local shop and he'd tellt her it wiz heroin that hid been heated on the foil. Seemingly there wiz a lot o drug takin aboot the toon noo a days.

A gye thochtfu Mabel made her wye hame tae her hoosie. Afore she'd loved bidin here but noo it fellt tae her like a prison. She couldna enjoy her gairden ony mair and recently they'd teen tae throwin steens at Catty finivver he wint ootside and on mair than one occasion hid hit him.

This wint on for months till ae nicht she'd heard a commotion oot the backie and Catty myowin in agony. She'd jist gotten oot in time tae see the lad and three o his pals throwin Catty in the air wi a squeeb attached tae him. It wint aff wi a bang and Catty howled in terror and pain. Screamin hersel Mabel got Catty intae her bosie and ran intae the hoose wi him, followed by mocking laughter fae the

fower men.

She'd tried athing tae help Catty but as he started tae shak wi shock she'd seen the life leave his bonny blue ee. She'd graat and graat and graat ower Catty and kept him tae her bosie. Aa the while steens were stottin aff her reef and windaes as the men cairried on laachin and caain her an aal witch.

Early the following mornin Mabel beeriet Catty ablow his favourite bush. She hoped that neen o the lads saw her, but naebody did, they were ower busy sleepin aff their drink and drug filled souls.

Ower the next few months the tormentin didna stop, she'd stopped gyan oot tae tidy up noo and jist left the rubbish tae accumulate. If she did show her heed oot the back they'd shout aboot roasted cats and throw steens at her.

Mabel hated bidin in the hoose so she'd use her pensioner's bus pass and ging awa maist days. She'd een o yon wee trolleys wi twa wheels that ye pulled ahin ye. Affa handy for eerins but also tae tak wi her on the bus wi her flask and sandwiches and some ither things she'd need for the day.

It wid've been a sax weeks later that she wiz sittin watchin 'They Carved Her name With Pride' that a strange thing happened. As usual as the film ended she'd burst oot greetin but this time the greetin wiz so uncontrollable that she thocht she'd nivver manage tae stop. Aa the traumas o the past fyowe months seemed tae come tae the fore and the tears flowed like a river.

She felt something touch her cheek and fin she looked here wiz Catty and its paw touchin her cheek like he used tae dee. Oh me but she teen him intae her bosie an sobbin, "Yer back! Yer back!"

The big blue ee looked at her as she said this. Mabel must've fell asleep because fin she wakened she wiz shiverin wi the caal. Och she'd let the Aga gyang oot ana. The tv aff station jist sizzed awa so she switched it aff. Shoutin for Catty she searched aroon but nae signs o him could she see. Mabel kent she'd been dreamin but oh me, it seemed so real tae her.

Next day wiz pension day so she made her wye doon tae the Post Office. There wiz an affa lot o ongyans and abody wiz speakin aboot the drugs war that wiz gyan on in the North East o Scotland. Seemingly there wiz an assassin gan aboot killin drug dealers and so far there'd been fower deaths. Mabel hearin this felt like sayin that she wished he'd come an shoot the bugger that bade at the back o her.

Ower the next twa years Mabel spent nearly ivvery day awa on the bus. She jist couldna abide her ain hoose now. But still some nichts she'd sit and watch her special film and fin she graat Catty wid come tae her bosie and look at her wi his bonny blue ee. She wiz weel aware Catty wiz deed but she enjoyed feelin him in her bosie aa the same, imagination or no it seemed so real.

Mabel, intae her siventies now decided tae mak a will. So ae day she wint in by a local solicitor tae get een made up. The hoose and athing wi it she left tae the young couple that used tae bide at the back o her alang wi the fyowe coppers she'd in the bank. Her Post Office savings accoont hid a good puckle siller in it so that wiz tae be left tae the S.S.P.C.A. for tae look aifter cats. She'd nae faimly o ony kind so rather that let athing gyang tae the Crown she thocht this wiz the fairest thing she could dee.

The solicitor duly made up the will and a couple o days later

she'd tae gyang and sign it and twa o the office staff counter signed it as witnesses. Her affairs now in order, Mabel returned hame and that nicht watched her film. Catty came intae her bosie and she cuddled him as the tears ran doon her cheeks. It wiz comin on the wikeyne, always the worst time for Mabel, fin her neighbour wid hae his drunken mates inaboot. The steens wid start eence mair rattlin doon her reef.

Aa the windaes at the back o the hoose were broken noo and her eence bonny gairden wild and unkept. There wisna ony point in plantin floors noo because that nicht some o the lads wid come intae the gairden an staan aa ower them.

* * *

The fire engines, police and ambulance were on the scene, they'd nivver seen onything like this afore. At the back o the hoose were fower burned bodies.

Seemingly they'd been sittin oot the backie enjoyin a quiet drink fin somebody hid thrown a napalm type grenade in amongst them?

Naebody could get near the bodies for the burnin syrup type stuff that continued tae incinerate them as the emergency fowk stood helplessly and watched. The police said it wiz anither gang war hit. Another four bodies tae add tae the five itheres that hid been shot.

They were caad by the papers 'The Double Tap Murders' on the accoont that each hid been shot twice one round in the chest an yin atween the een.

Aifter the fire eventually wint oot the fower bodies were examined for bullet wounds but neen wiz found so they'd been

roasted alive.

"Poor buggers!" said the pathologist, "They died in agony and it widnae hae been that fast!"

The papers got a hud o it and said the 'Double Tap Murderer' hid moved ontae a new weapon o terror. It wiz aa speculation of coorse for the only link that there wiz between the deed wiz they were aa drug dealers baith big and smaa.

But fitivver, the Chief Constable wiz teen ower the coals for nae catchin the killer. Poor man hid jist teen it on the chin because naebody hid ony idea faa wiz responsible. They'd drawn a complete blank. The bullets used in the ither murders wiz completely unknown tae the fire arms experts that kent only that they must be specially made for executions like this due tae the devastating effect the low velocity rounds hid on the human body. The only ither forensic type clue wiz that at each murder scene they'd found tiny bitties o rubber. That wiz it! Nae anither thing tae gyan on ava.

Police officers did a door tae door, seein if onybody his seen or heard onything, and apart fae fowk haein heard the dull thud o the grenade and the horrible screams o the dyin men nae useful information wiz gotten.

Mabel faa hid been the nearest, said that jist afore the explosion she'd heard somebody rinnin throwe her gairden. The constable duly noted her statement and tellt her that she'd probably be getting a visit fae C.I.D. afore lang.

It wisna till the next day that a detective sergeant and a constable peyed her a visit. They chapped on the door but got nae answer the constable peered in the windae but jumped back as a cat

cloured at the widae and hissed.

“Gweed sakes!” he shouted jumpin back in fear!

Turnin tae the detective he said, “Did ye see that?”

The detective shook his heed an speired;

“See fit?”

The constable still shakin tellt him aboot the big angry lookin cat wi one ee almost comin throwe the windae at him!

“Oot o the wye!” the DS said pushin him aside and teen a look in the windae but saw nithing,

“Michty min ye must’ve been imagining things.”

Gyan roon the back they found the door open. The constable stood aside tae let the detective gyang in first. The detective laughed at this and said, “Are ye feart o catties min?”

He got twa steps inside fin he wished he’d nivver mocked the young policeman. The one ee’d cat wiz there and in seconds hid clookit baith his legs till the bleed wiz fleein.

Wi a gasp o pure terror he ran fae the hoose knockin the young constable doon on the wye oot. Aifter a lot o cursing they looked intae the back windae and could see an aal woman sittin at a desk aside a big stove. She wisna moving and fin they knocked the big one eyed cat near came throwe the glaiss at them.

It teen a couple o oors for the lassie fae S.S.P.C.A. tae arrived but fin she wint in nae sign o a cat did she find. Feelin like a richt pair o plunkers the DS and the constable wint tae the body.

Mabel sat at her wee roll top desk staring intae nithing. At one side o her sat an empty coffee cup at the ither an ashtray wi twa tabbies squashed intae it and a wee tin canister as thick as a fountain

pen wi a skull & crossbones and one word, ‘Cyanide’.

“Oh God!” said the DS, “Go get the big boys doon here!”

The constable stood like a statue, lookin at Mabel.

“Go on min and dinna touch onything said the DI!”

Galvanised the PC made awa.

Ower the next couple o days the place wiz fulled wi army bomb disposal teams, forensic fowk and the Chief Constable. A complete news blackoot wiz in place and in the end it wid tak weeks afore ony sense could be made o their findings and even then nae information wiz ivver given oot aboot fit hid happened.

The Chief Constable sat at his desk fingerin the report in front o him. He jist couldna believe fit he’d jist read. First ava they’d found oot that Mabel hid made the napalm used in the grenade in her back shed. And it wiz so simple how she did it. She’d used easy tae hand materials tae mak it, a haanfae o chaip electronic lighters strapped on a weighted steel plate fae an Aga attached tae a canister fulled o petrol and ither stuff she’d used tae mak the napalm. Fin the weighted plate hit the grun the device wint up like a grenade dowsin abody within aboot ten feet in flaming syrup. That wiz bad enough as tae how an aal woman in her seventies could mak such a device but it got much much worse as tae fit else they’d found in the shed.

He still couldna get the next bit richt in his heed. The search team hid found a pistol, and nae an ordinary pistol. This wiz a pistol designed for assassination. It hid a clip wi twa bullets in it but again nae ordinary bullets like ye’d expect. Oh no! This bullets were designed tae fit the special pistol. But the maist amazing bit hid been the silencer for the weapon. It wiz in size and shape like a Vim tin but

made o aluminium, inside it wiz fulled o ground doon bike inner tubes tae absorb the sound o the discharge. That's far the rubber hid come fae at each o the hits that naebody could explain.

The two bullets were for the 'Double Tap'. One tae the chest the ither atween the een. They'd found a box o fifty o these specialist bullets but twenty two were missing. The used cartridges hid been found in her rolltop desk each pair taped thegither and a code on each. Twenty two o them. There'd been five hits, one in Fraserburgh, one in Peterhead and three in Aberdeen that accounted for ten bullets so fit happened tae the ither twelve?

* * *

At this moment the Security Services were trying tae decipher the coded index cards they found in her desk tae find the names o the ither missing bodies. The man fae MI5 stood lookin oot the Chief Constable's office windae.

He turned fin he heard the file being closed and wi a wry smile teen oot another file but this yin wiz different. It wiz buff coloured and hid a reed line across it wi the words 'Most Secret'.

"Divulge what's in here and you'll end your days in the Tower!" he said tae the Chief Constable.

Hesitatingly, as if it wid explode in his face, the Chief Constable took the file and opened it. He could see richt awa it wiz a service record. The wee photo at the left hand side showed a really bonny lassie smiling intae the camera.

But it wiz the title that teen his attention.

Mabel - - - - -. S.O.E..Born Peterhead Scotland 14th June

1923

Recruited April 4th 1943

Special aptitudes languages, firearms and explosives.

Trained Achtnacarry Scotland.

Dropped as 'Moon Strike,' France September 1944

Tasked- assassination.

S.O.E. disbanded 1946

Carried out tasks for H.M. Government until stood down July 15th 1958.

Awarded the Military Medal November 1960 for services rendered to the Crown..

The Chief Constable looked up at the MI5 man.

"She was Special Operations Executive?

The MI5 man nodded and said, "Churchill wanted them to set Europe ablaze!"

Noddin towards the file he said, "She was the very best the S.O.E. ever put into the field with a string of assassinations to her credit longer than my arm! The best of the best!"

He snatched up baith files and put them intae his briefcase.

"So you'll agree that this story must never get out?"

Athoot waitin for a reply he made for the door and paused.

"Incidentally if you do find any of the missing bodies just get in touch with us and we'll have a sanitising team up north pronto!"

Wi a cheery "Toodlepip old chap!" he left the office leaving the Chief Constable contemplating the wee cottage on the Buchan coast and early retirement.

Tales fae Dr Festing Makadoork's Case Book: The Dalek

I'm a psychologist of the far-fae-normal and through the years I have met with many strange people. Here is a case that at the outset seemed to be beyond my understanding.

It was in the summer of 1958 and I was in my surgery above the chip shop, having just seen off another patient with a course of antibiotics. That had been the thirtieth prescription I'd handed out that morning. This was at the time before I specialised as a practitioner of the 'Far-fae-normal' but experimented in a new phenomena called the placebo effect, and loads of antibiotics.

If a patient had any psychological problems, I'd prescribe antibiotics and the suggestion they get a bottle of whisky and get boiled. If someone had eating disorders, I'd prescribe them antibiotics and suggest they visit Toni's chip shop below for a greasy pie supper, a pickled egg with plenty salt and brown sauce; then visit the off licence for a bottle of whisky. Incidentally, back then salt was good for you and so was smoking. (How I well remember the adverts in my dirty magaz- - I mean Medical Anatomy Journals, how the scantily clad erotic female with a glass of champers in one hand and a cigarette in the other stating to the world that she only smoked Dr Benson's health cigarettes.)

As a doctor I found out early the power of the white coat I always wore to give the ambiance of professionalism and to back up the placebo effect. Such was the power of suggestion they all without one dissention carried out my advice to the letter. Remember, this was

back in the day when antibiotics cured everything.

Miss Jolly my receptionist came in with my elevenses, a cup of tea and some Abernethy biscuits. Miss Jolly sounds as if she were young and pretty with a happy smiling face. Wrong! She was old and had the sorest expression I have ever seen on a person. But she was a bloody good receptionist and could handle any unruly dockers, seamen and whores who made up my clientele with one glower from above her half lens glasses. If that didn't work, she could eject them from the premises and onto the street like a bosun's mate clearing the decks of an H.M. ship of unruly coolies rioting against British Imperialism on the China station.

The unruly and often drunk sailors and dockers would be shown the egress by her fingers up their nostrils of one hand while the other hand grabbed their scrotums in her fist of iron and flung them from the top of the stairs to the street in one screaming heave.

The women fared no better and were given the self same treatment. And although minus a scrotum for her to grab onto Miss Jolly being a rather inventive soul applied a similar technique with exactly the same results of them laying on the street moaning and cursing her.

When I'd applied for a receptionist just after the war, Miss Jolly's references had stood out from the other one. She had a lot of glowing references from naval officers, bosuns, bosun's mates, leading hands etc and each and every one committing to paper that she was extremely efficient at her job. I didn't ask her what job that might've been.

And after employing her and seeing how well she could

handle herself, I thought it prudent not to ask such a fool question. But through the gun decks she surely had been! In fact, by her age she might have serviced seamen back in the day of the Kaiser's war or even before. With her brows down she said;

“There’s one last patient to see you doctor.”

I could see a wee touch of distaste pass across her distasteful face. I’m glad I caught it. It must have been the sunlight coming through the window that did it. Normally on such a distasteful face you wouldn’t normally see another even more distasteful look sweep across the distasteful face you were used to seeing as her normal everyday distasteful face.

“Shall I send him in?” she asked with a sour distasteful look that soured the very milk in my tea.

I swear the globules of rancid fat floated to the surface of my cup. I nodded pushing the soured tea aside picking up a biscuit but changed my mind when I saw the very butter on them had turned to rotten globules. She left and in a few moments the patient knocked on the door. I waited a moment for effect, put on my caring face and requested the patient to enter.

A man of perhaps middle height, running a little to fat, came in. I could see he was nervous so I motioned to the chair. He sat rather forward and ill at ease. I’d read that in the US, psychologists waited for their clients to speak first; thus triggering feelings of control in their clients. This was a perfect opportunity for me. I just sat looking at him and such a strange ‘looking at’ it was.

Perhaps age-wyes he would’ve been in his late thirties early forties. His physiognomy was roundish and his features rather

indistinct and unremarkable. The most remarkable thing about his face would've been the eyes. They were cruel in the extreme and flashed pure malice somewhat like a strobe light. That reminded me on the Japanese officer during the war that had came at me out of the jungle with a samurai sword screaming BANZI! He had had the self same cruel eyes but the thirty six rounds from my bren had put that particular pair of cruel eyes off to look at his ancestors.

The client had still never spoken, so I used the time productively. He smelled of very expensive cigars and I'm sure he wore woman's scent. Not the usual smells I normally got from my clients. They usually smelled of body sweat, rollups, woodbines and often much worse things. On his left lapel he wore a white carnation and on the opposite one he had some little expensive looking badges, some in the shape of set squares, grains of sand and such like.

The suit was of a very expensive cut and was obviously from Savile Row. The tailor had done a very good job of disguising his slightly deformed frame. Even the pinstripes had been adjusted like an optical illusion to look straight. To the general public he would've look fine but to my expert eye the deformation was obvious. I could see he was getting a little more pensive and was breathing as if he was about to speak so I just waited.

Eventually after what seemed an age he blurted out;

"I am a feckin Dalek!"

His voice was tinny as if spoken through a bean can with static electricity and delivered in a monotone with no inflexion in his voice whatever. I thought that 'Feckin Dalek' must be a mispronunciation of an unknown medical condition. To me it must've been, because

there was indeed something far far wrong with his voice. So I asked-

"What kind of illness was 'feckin Dalek'?"

He told me in his strange voice that he was a 'feckin Dalek' and that he'd came here with his friends from the other side of the galaxy to conquer earth.

He went on to tell me that at the beginning the 'feckin Daleks' were just blobs like big slugs and used to move about in little tank like vehicles with a viewfinder on the end of a tube and little lights that lit up as they spoke. In the middle was a death ray that made enemies dissolve into the quantum level of existence. That was before they the 'feckin Daleks' were genetically modified to look much more humanoid.

I tried to remain calm. My hand moved towards the intercom. One press of the panic button and Miss Jolly would be through in an instant and in the next instant the 'feckin Dalek' bastard would be on the street pronto, screaming in his monotone static electrical bean can voice. But I desisted and removed my hand from the button and instead lit a senior service cigarette. I offered the 'feckin Dalek' one but he refused preferring one of his cigars.

Soon we were both sitting relaxed and in friendly companionship as we puffed on our respective addictive delivery systems. Afterwards though, it was back to business as doctor and client.

As by way of conversation I asked him what he did for a living. But he seemed reluctant to say and tried to fog the issue by remarking on the beautiful weather we were having in Aberdeen for a change. So I changed tack a little by asking him what he thought of

the National Health Service. His eyes grew cruel and he started with his bean can voice saying:

“I am a feckin Dalek---exterminate---exterminate!”

I then asked about all the poor people who before the N.H.S. couldn’t afford medical treatment. And what else could we do for them? Again he started,

“I am a feckin Dalek---exterminate---exterminate!”

“George Orwell?”

“I am a feckin Dalek- - - exterminate- - - exterminate!”

“Adolf Hitler?”

“I am a feckin dalek- - - lick his arse- - - lick his arse.”

By this time his eyes were bulging and white foam had gathered at the side of his mouth.

“Oh Jesus!” I groaned, “we’ve a right one here!”

The last question I asked was the only real question that would prove to me how ill this person was. So I asked;

“What do you think of Aberdonians?”

At this he just lost it completely and crashing backwards in the chair onto the floor holding one arm out from the front of his brow and the other from his waist he lay shouting through the bean can;

“I am a feckin Dalek!- - -greedy bastards - - - exterminate- - - exterminate- - - exterminate!”

The pitch did change though and got higher and higher till Miss Jolly came in with her equaliser in her fist. She’d told me it was a belaying pin that a sailor on Victory had once given her. (What bloody age was she?) A swift application onto the ‘feckin Dalek’s’ cranium soon put a stop to his ‘exterminate’ shite.

I just sat there shaking my head and looking up at Miss Jolly said, “A terminal case of anti Aberdonius here. Prepare room 101 Miss Jolly!”

Ten minutes later the ‘feckin Dalek’ was seated in the little anex room cowering away from Miss Jolly.

Miss Jolly stood at his side her face, as sour as I’d ever seen it before with the belaying pin gripped so tightly in her fist the knuckles were snow white. I noticed the bag of salt placed and ready at the far corner of the room and gave her a reassuring nod.

I placed a bottle of whisky on the table in front of the ‘feckin dalek’ and my old army revolver with one bullet in the chamber beside it.

“Do the proper thing old chap! You have ten minutes to decide?” Nodding towards Miss Jolly, I added, “If not Miss Jolly here will see to you with her belaying pin!”

As I turned to leave the ‘feckin Dalek’ went into complete static overload. The bean can voice almost ruptured. Turning back to Miss Jolly I reminded her to use plenty of salt to dissolve the fecker’s slug like blobby body.

The Burkers.

The old Travelling woman and her grandson were on the road. They were making for a communal camp site where Travelling families spent the winter.

It was a good area to await the coming spring, for the men helped with the ‘hairst’ and the women could sell their wares to the local inhabitants.

Her grandson Hector was twelve years old and quite the young man now. She hoped he would get a job at the hairst along with the other Travellers; the money would set them up for the winter.

The road had been long and arduous for the old woman and her legs not being so good nowadays they’d made slow progress, so much so that they were well behind schedule. In the loam of approaching night, and the old woman sitting down at one of her more and more frequent stops, Hector wondered if they should ask a farmer for a place of rest for the night.

His words spurred the old woman to retort;
“Na na, we’ll cairry on a while langer,” and she continued,
“It’s nae dark yet, an we’re nae affa far fae the camp.”

Helping his grandmother up, Hector was very concerned for her. Her steps were getting rather tottery and several times he had to stop her from going her length on the metalled road.

Eventually he managed to persuade his grandmother that they should ask for a place to spend the night and knowing what he said made good sense she finally relented.

They made their way up the very next farm road. The old woman was quite literally at the end of her strength and the last few yards were pure torture to her aching legs. Hector knocked at the door while his grandmother sat on the edge of a horse trough. After a while the farmer came to the door and Hector told him of his grandmother and how tired she was and asked could they get a place to rest.

When the farmer saw how done in she was, he took pity and led them to the barn. He told them they could stay the night but said they weren't to light matches as there was a lot of straw and that he didn't want a fire.

They made themselves comfortable in the straw and rested. The old woman said the farmer was a kind man, but inwardly she had her misgivings. Wasn't this how people disappeared? Sleeping peacefully, then the squeak of the Burker's coach and the men with lum hats paying the farmer for tonight's haul.

"Thank you my man, an old woman and a young man to experiment on, the doctor's will be pleased!"

And then, OBLIVION! Two more Travellers gone!

The old woman tore her thoughts from the Burkers as someone entered the barn with a lantern.

She cowered to herself, "This is it!" And was about to set up a howl when she saw it was a young girl.

The girl gave them food from a basket and asked the old woman if she'd like some tea to wash the food down with. The girl shyly asked Hector if he'd like some too. Hector got very tongue tied for she was pretty and about the same age as himself. She left the lantern hanging from a beam while she went to fetch the tea.

They could now see what the barn looked like. The building wasn't very long, about twenty paces long by about ten broad. The part they were in was open to the rafters, at the other end was a simple loft and ladder leading up to it. Beneath, the loft was open apart from a few upright beams holding up the loft roof. Under this part were some barrels with lids on them, and some pieces of horse harness hung on the wall above them. Midway and to one side of the door on the roof was a skylight and through it the old woman could see the moon.

She muttered, "Caal iron, caal iron!" for it was supposed to be unlucky to see the moon through a frame.

The old Travellers believed that to see the moon as a prisoner meant that you saw your own soul imprisoned by the powers of darkness and to say 'caal iron' ensured that any evil spirits were kept at bay by this ancient magic chant.

Later, when they'd finished eating, the servant girl came and took the dishes away and at the same time removed the lantern. Thanking the girl and wishing her a goodnight, they settled themselves down on the straw. The old woman still thought about burkers but her tiredness and a full belly overcame any fears and she was soon asleep.

She awakened with a start. She'd heard something, a wind had risen, yes it was only the wind? Settling herself again, she began to drift off - when she heard the sound again. Sitting up fully this time, she listened intently. On the wind she heard what sounded like a coach and horses coming up the farm road. She got up and listened again, sure enough on the wind was the sound again, she thought to

herself ‘BURKERS!’

Her attention turned to the barrels at the far end of the building. She’d heard stories that sometimes parts of human beings were pickled, to keep them fresh for doctors at the colleges to do foul experiments on. Making her way slowly towards the barrels by the light of the moon through the skylight and, being careful not to look up at the moon, she eventually came to the barrels. Feeling about, and it being completely dark under the attic, she found a barrel and pulled the lid open.

She put her hand into the barrel which was full of some kind of liquid. Searchingly she sweeled about and touched something. Lifting whatever it was out, she gave a scream as she realised it was a similar type of thing that was on the end of her own arm. She threw the hand away from her and whimpered at her find, for she’d lost her breath with terror.

Hector, awakened by the noise and commotion shouted into the darkness, “Whit’s wrang grunny! Whit’s aa the noise for?”

She replied in a voice of doom, “Oh shannish oh shannish!
Let’s get awa fae here the Burkers are comin for’s!”

Hector had heard plenty of stories about burkers but had always treated them in the same way as he did ghost stories; as good to listen to but not to be believed. Now though? As he heard the doom in his grandmother’s voice he wasn’t so sure. And panic beginning its first stirrings in his lower stomach he went over to her.

She said in desperate whispered tones, “We’ve got tae get awa fae here! I heard the coach o death comin up the fairm road, an they’ll tak us an cut us up an pit the bitties in yin o them barrels,” and added

in a completely doomed voice that wid mak a very monk's bowels turn tae water, "Naebody would ivver ken whit became o's and they'd search and search tae nae avail, an us aa the time in yin o them barrels or else lyin ontæ a slab and big gadgies cuttin lumps aff o us for experiments!"

Poor Hector nearly emptied himself on the spot at this and taking his grandmother by the hand he led her to the door but found it wouldn't move. Desperately he pulled and pulled at the door but it just wouldn't budge.

Whimpering now he said shakily, "It's locked!"

The old woman hearing his words gave a low moan and slid to the floor in a faint. Hector attacked the door again with renewed vigour. Although he was twelve, there was still the frightened child in him and seeing his grandmother going into a faint, he knew they were doomed.

Hardly noticing in his panic, his fingernails splitting on the rough timber of the door, he ineffectually and without logical reason clawed at the door; long since forgetting about the handle and giving free reign to the primeval survival instinct that is within us all.

Slowly, the pain of torn fingernails began to slip into his panic clouded brain and with it came reason. He stopped and held his torn hands under his oxters, his breath coming in painful gasps and a weakness in his knees. Slowly he went to his grandmother who lay on the floor moaning.

She kept repeating, "Caal iron, caal iron! Oh me the shancouls are comin caal iron caal iron oh shannish shannish!" followed by a gibbering sound before repeating the phrase over again.

Hector was old enough to realise his grandmother was on the point of complete nervous collapse. Sitting her up and talking softly to her, she slowly became coherent. After a time she got shakily to her feet and without a word apart from the gibbering sound went over in the direction of the attic. Hector thinking she'd finally cracked and was going for some reason to the barrels, made to stop her but was pushed roughly aside. Instead of going to the barrels she took the loft ladder and placed it immediately below the skylight.

Then she roughly grabbed him and in desperate tones said, "Oot! we'll get oot this wye!"

Hector comprehending and with relief said, "The skylight," and in revered tones added, "I widna hae thocht o that!"

He quickly climbed the ladder and soon had the skylight opened.

He reached down and took his grandmother's hand saying urgently, "Come on Grunny!"

Soon she was at his heels. Hector climbed out of the skylight and reached back in for his grandmother. She managed to get her head and shoulders through the opening, but no matter how she tried she couldn't get the rest of her through and was soon stuck fast.

Hearing the clatter of horses on the road, Hector pulled desperately at the old woman but she couldn't budge. Knowing she was finished, she told Hector to save himself, to run for his life.

Hector refused to leave her and with a, "I'm nae leavin ye tae the burkers," and with tears of frustration he gave her one great heave.

But it was no use, he couldn't get his grandmother free. The

old woman implored Hector to run, and aware that the end was near, said to him,

“Go! Get awa! Gyang tae the camp, it’s nae affa far fae here an come back wi some o the men, tell them the Burkers are here!”

Reluctantly, Hector did as he was told, even though he knew he’d never get to the encampment on time let alone come back with the men; although he reasoned that if he did escape they’d be reluctant to touch his grandmother, for Burkers didn’t like witnesses.

Soon he was gone and the old woman, with her head and shoulders out of the skylight, could clearly hear the coming horses on the wind. She began to chant again and before long the gibbering sound. Mostly it was gibbering interspersed with blubbering sound. As mental collapse drew nearer saliva began to flow giving the gibbering sound a wet blubber.

How long she was in this state she never knew. Perhaps she’d lost consciousness? Whatever, the next she was aware of it was daybreak and someone was pulling at her legs. She gave a weak scream and kicked out with her foot. A shout of exclamation followed by a crash came from below. The old woman began to scream.

“Leave me alone! Yer nae gan tae be cuttin me up intae wee bitties!”

A string of oaths threatening to bring all the bad luck upon the head of her tormentor that she could conjure up from the Black Arts.

Cloven hooves, cold iron, goblins and shancouls were mentioned. Threat of seed, breed and generations cursed with infertility, infidelity and constant states of inebriation were spouted. Reflections of their past genealogy and questions illegitimacy of her

tormentor was raised and the reproductive organs of the body were even expounded, a knowledge of which would do any physician proud; whitelivered, blackhearted and redeyed were some. And physical impurities of the body's organs were aired as well as the hope of her tormentor being blessed with such things as a humpy back, baldy pow, ringle e'e, hingin lugs, soor mooth, bachel'd legs, with the additional hope that the next time her tormentor went to evacuate himsel that he would pass molten lead.

After she finished, and feeling her tormentor pulling at her legs, she knew all her curses were to no avail. She went quite limp and passive. Resigning herself to her fate, she began to gibber again and was dimly aware of hands dragging her down; no doubt to cut her throat. Instead of getting her throat cut she was met by words of concern.

The farmer was very distressed and wanted to know what had happened and why she was hanging half in and out of the skylight.

The old woman as hopeful as she had been despondent a minute ago and sensing victory was within her grasp said haughtily,

"Aye, nae so keen now eh! Nae knifies oot oot now eh! Fan ye see my grandson's escaped yer tryin tae kid on that yer concerned?"

And finished with an even bolder statement of fact and a question rolled into one "EH!"

The farmer seemed completely confused. He just stood there with his mouth wide open as the old angry woman went on about bodies in barrels, coaches driven by men in lum hats and doctors cutting bodies to pieces on slabs.

Slowly the farmer began to understand what she was talking

about and asked her to let him see the body barrel.

She went to one of the barrels and threw the lid back with a crash,

“THERE!” she said, pointing to the contents. She continued in an mournful voice, “Whit poor fowk hiv ye got in there? Did they ask for a place tae sleep ana?”

Shaking her head in a disbelieving way, she was about to start her harangue again when the farmer pulled out a leg of pork from the barrel and asked;

“Is this yer body?”

The old woman gave a short laugh and replied that he’d probably switched barrels when he found out that her grandson had escaped and just in case the police came.

She continued with, “Why wiz the door locked then?”

The farmer said the door wasn’t locked, but the old woman disagreed volubly saying her grandson had pulled with all his might but couldn’t get it open. She was more than surprised when he informed her the door didn’t open inwards but outwards and her grandson had been closing the door instead of opening it.

Feeling rather foolish now, and not wishing to seem the complete fool, the old woman tried to outsmart the farmer by saying;

“Then why wiz the coach and horses comin clatterin up the road?”

The farmer denied the existence of a coach and horses, at which the old woman jumped in with the accusal of a cover up. She told him she’d heard the coach clearly on the wind and there was no mistaking the clatter of hooves nor the squeak of coach wheels.

Hearing her mention the wind reminded him of the water pump and when he told her the sound she'd heard was only the windwheel working to pump water from the well, she had to concede then that she'd been mistaken.

By this time all the farmhands had gathered to find out what was going on and at the culmination of the story they burst into laughter. The old woman was at first angry but had herself to laugh especially when she remembered how she'd blubbered with terror. Her laughter was at first nervous, then when she remembered the look on Hector's face, it became hysterical. She was still laughing when the men in lum hats came for her pushing a bound and tearful Hector in front of them.

The Clootie Dummmplin!

Aal Mrs Robinson wiz an affa fine craiter, an so wiz her man Jocky. He'd been the gravedigger for Macduff Toon Cooncil up at the Myrus cemetary until he retired in 1935.

They bade doon at the heed o Hutcheon street yonder but the hoosie like themsels is lang awa an forgotten, an mair's the peety.

They'd a fine yard at the back o the hoosie faar Jocky grew aa kinds o berries an vegetables an sic like.

By this time Jocky wiz gettin on a bittie, an wisna sae swaak aboot the hochs as he eence wiz. Noo it wiz a greet an a girn tae get yokit an mighty, but the yard wiz a fair caa tee. Onyhoo, wi this the gairden wiz getting gye neglecit like. This didna suit Mrs Robson ava, so she suggested he speir at his pal Ackers Lendum if he'd dee the yard for him. Ackers wiz a lot younger than Jocky and hid teen ower his job fin he'd retired. Fin asked Ackers said;

“Michty aye min I'll fairly dee that!”

Nae siller changed haans of coarse but Ackers wid be getting a share in the produce. Noo this arrangement suited Ackers doon tae the grun for he'd sell his share tae the local shops tae mak a sair knott shillin for his beer. Better norr that, ilka time he vrocht in the yard Mrs Robson wid come oot wi a slab o clootie dumplin.

She'd speir at him, “Wid ye be likin a daad o clootie dummmplin Ackers?”

Michty but Ackers wiz that fond o her dumpling, an tae Mrs Robson he praised her clootie dumplin (or as she'd say clootie

dummmplin) tae the high heavens. An wi this praise, aa the mair clootie dummmplins did she'd mak.

It wiz the hinner eyne o the season an Ackers wiz clearin the grun an dailin it ower for the neist year. Aal Jocky helpit faar he could an brunt aa the deed growth in the midden tae mak intae potash for the gairden. They were vrochtin awa newsin aboot this an that an ivvery noo an then Ackers wid gyang ower tae the plate a big slab o clootie dumplin lay on an teer aff another fyng o't an mash it doon his thrapple. Aal Jocky jist shook his heed thinkin, 'Michty that's aboot the third slab o't he's pitten awa an it nae haaf throwe the mornin's yoking. Gweed sakes faar diz he pit it aa?'

Onywye Jocky teen a barrafae o kail reets ower the wye o the midden wi a bit o a grunt for his hochs were playin up eynoo. There wiz an affa narra bit between the shed an the hoordin. Ahin the hoordin lay the midden. As he passed throwe wi the loaded barra his sark caught on a nail that near tore it fae his back aathegither.

Wi a curse an a bit o a stotter, Jocky coupit the barra an skailed the kail reets aboot the grun. Mair than cursin he made tae pick athing up but faa should come inaboot but Mrs Robson herself.

"Michty min that's an affa din yer at! Fit's the waur wi ye?"

Jocky wiz grummlin aboot the skailed reets an his gweed sark bein ruined. Ackers wiz taakin aa this in an kittlin Jocky up. He lookit neen ower pleased aboot it. So Ackers teen the chance o a bit rest an another daad o dumplin tae sit an watch the ongyans.

"It's ma gweed sark! Look at that!" grummled Jockie

Mrs Robson hid a lookie at it sayin, "Gweed be here min that sark's like yersel aal an deen. I'll nae be able tae sort that!"

Jocky started grummlin eence mair but Mrs Robson stoppit him in mid grummle.

“Tak it aff ye girnin all bugger an I’ll get ye anither yin!”

So sayin she made intae the hoose.

Still a bittie vrocht up, Jocky did as he wiz bid an teen it aff but nae afore he’d teen his wastcoat, gallusus an belt aff first though.

Ackers wiz sittin watchin the reels, an mashin yet mair dumplin intae his face.

Jocky’s sark wiz made o thick wool like the army wore but a grey colour that hid lang tails tae them tae haap a man’s back fae the caal. As he teen it aff Ackers spotted dried shite stickin tae the tail o’t an throwe a moothfae o dumplin shouted;

“Michty Jocky ye must’ve let the tail o yer sark get in the road o yer last shite min?”

Commin ower a glaickit, Jocky wuppit up the sark tae hide the offendin broon bits an wiz on the point o haivin it ontae the midden fin Mrs Robson returned wi anither sark.

Ackers throwe a big moothfae o crummles shouted;

“Caught wi the shite covered tail!”

Mrs Robson gye come at, says tae Jocky, “Fit are ye deein min? Ye mauna throw that awa!”

So sayin she grabbit it fae him an taakin a pair o shears fae her aapron pooch started cuttin aff the shite covered tail sayin; “Ye ken fine I like tae keep the tails o yer aal sarks for tae mak ma clootie dummmplins!”

The Final Serving.

The train pulled intae Macduff station and the sojer lad stepped doon fae the guard box intae the caal nicht air. He thanked Jimmy Reid the guard for the hurl. He'd been stranded in Aberdeen and wid've hin tae wyte till the next mornin for the Macduff train but Jimmy hid spotted him. Jimmy kent his father Geordie Sangster. They'd been at school thegither, so he'd shouted him ower and offered him a hurl on the late goods train gyan tae Macduff. Harry hid been fair chuffed and in nae time wiz in the guard box haein a fine strong cup o tay and o aa things a Dandyduff butterie. He thocht he wiz in heaven.

Harry walked fae the station doon intae the toon wi his kitbag on his shooder. So far he'd been sax weeks ontae a troopship and the last fortyeight oors on different trains fae Southampton. He wiz tired, hungry and feelin the caal chill breeze comin aff the Moray Firth.

Makin his wye doon tae Duff street he noticed there wisna muchle fowk gyan aboot. Maybe it bein sic a caal nicht fowk were mair inclined tae their ain hearth steens. He got the waft o breed fae the bakehouse. Aal Tammar Stewart nae doot hard at it getting stuff ready for the next day.

As he wint doon the street memories came floodin back tae fin he wiz a bairn. A lot o years hid passed since he ran up an doon this brae wi his pals. The sichts an sounds o the harbour or the fine smell o the smoke sheds as they kippered herrin or cured haddocks.

Though aa the shops were shut for the nicht, he noticed a licht

on in Candy Nellie's sweetie shop. Candy Nellie wisna her richt name, that wiz Mary Simpson but tae generations o Dandyduffers she wiz Candy Nellie. God the pu-candy she made wiz nivver tae be forgotten, a great sworll the size o yer hand for a bawbee and if ye did it richt ye could mak it last a whole day.

He tried the door an found it open. The wee bell rang oot as the door hut it and pushed the wee airm. Though the licht wiz turned doon low Harry could see the different sweeties in tin trays on the simple widden coontter. He waited a couple o minutes but naebody appeared so he shouted "SHOP!"

A skuffle came fae the back room and Candy Nellie wiz there wi her smiling face jist as he mind.

"Aye sojer lad fit can I dee for ye?"

Even her voice wiz the same and she'd hardly aged ava. Obviously she didna recognise him but then again why would she wi the amount o bairns that hid passed throwe her door in aa the years?

He tellt her that fin he wiz on the Peshawar plains in India he'd often thocht o her pu-candy. She smiled her kind smile and wint tae een o the trays and got him a sworll. She put it intae a wee paper bag afore handin it ower the coontter.

Harry speired at her foo muckle it cost but she shook her heed sayin she wisna seekin siller for it and that if he enjoyed it that wiz aa the peyment she nott. He thanked her and made for the door sayin good nicht. Jist as he left he heard her saying;

"Aye good nicht tae you ana Harry!"

Michty she must've mind on him aifter aa this time. He thocht o gan back inside but he could see her turnin the lamp oot so he

decided he'd gyang back another day.

Makin his wye tae his mither's at Tarlair Street, he felt the shiver in his bones as if the fever fae the Peshawar plains wiz returning. But he shrugged that aff sayin tae himsel it wiz only the caal ween and he wiz tired.

The familiar sight o Tarlair Street teen his mind fae dwelling on the fevers that near killed him in the burnin heat o India. His step quickened as he neared his ain door. It hid been seven lang years since he last walked here.

He could see the greenish glow o the gas licht ahin his mither's closed curtains and could picture her sittin there knittin in front o the range or maybe makin scones on the girdle. He tried the door but it wiz locked, so he gave a light chap. A minty or twa later and the door opened and there wiz his aal mither so he teen her intae his bosie wi a "Mam!"

Oh, sic a welcome he got. Father came ben the hoose wi his pipe in his moo and the glasses perched up on his broo and grabbed his laddie and danced aroon.

Harry started tae say something but the words nivver formed as he collapsed in a heap and lay still as if he wiz deed.

He came tee tae find himsel lyin on his ain bed wi aal Doctor McBain leanin ower him. He could see his mither and father standin at the ither side o the bed wi really concerned looks on their faces. He tried tae tell them he'd be aaricht, that it wiz only the fever but the spasms o fever wracked throwe his body again, makin speech impossible.

The next thing he kent wiz the feeling o caal water being

swabbed ontae his broo and as he opened his een he saw it wiz his mither. He could see that she'd been greetin and he couldna imagine why, so he teen her hand in his and saw her smile wi relief.

Ower the next couple o weeks Harry got back tae his feet but michty, he wiz as weak as a kittlin. Slowly, he got mair mobile and Doctor McBain suggested that he should get oot intae the fresh air.

The next day it wiz a fine sunny day, so Harry put on his civie clyes and wint for a traivell. His clyse were far too slack on him and he fellt uncomfortable weerin breeks instead o the kilt he wiz used tae. Neentheless he wint for a walk alang the shore.

The fine appetising smell o fish being smoked wint roon his hert like a hairy worm. Some o the fisher loons were workin on the nets. He kent een or twa o them, so he stood up for a bit news wi them.

A fylie later he found himsel near the fit o Duff street so he thocht he'd gang in past Candy Nellie tae thank her again for the pu-candy and maybe buy a bit mair cause he must've lost the last bit. Onywyne as he approached the shop he could see the blinds were doon and it looked shut. Sic a shock he got fin he saw the neglected look o the place. The windae wiz dirty and on the inside he could see loads o deed bluebottles and wasps, some caught in the multitude o spider wobbs that hung awye. It hid only been a couple o weeks since he spoke tae her, so there wiz nae wye it could be in this state.

Fin Harry won his wye hame and sat doon for his denner he seemed affa deep in thought. His mither noticed this and speired if there wiz something wrang. Harry at first seemed reluctant but eventually tellt her aboot Candy Nellie and him gyan in by on the

nicht he'd came hame. His mither tellt him he couldna hae been intae the shop for it hid been shut for the past seven years, ivver since she'd died.

Doctor McBain came tae visit, so his mither tellt him fit Harry hid been tellin her aboot Candy Nellie.

Doctor McBain laached at this sayin; "Dinna you worry ma loon, ye nivver saw a ghost!" and tellt him that wi him suffering fae the fever, he'd only hid a wee bit o a hallucination and that wiz quite normal.

Of course Harry believed this but somehow it still left him feelin a wee bittie uneasy.

Onywyne a fyowe wiks later he'd gottin his marchin orders and wiz tae leave for Fort George up the Inverness wye. His mither readied his kit makin sure the pleats on his kilt were perfect and that his tunic wiz pressed and clean. Aifter she'd layed athing oot, she teen the sporran tae gie it a polish and tidy up. Something fell tae the grun so she bent doon tae pick it up.

It wis a wee paper bag and inside there wiz a big sworll o pu-candy.

Tales fae Doctor Makadoork's Case Book:
Chappit neeps and kail Jean, something saft and sweet.

Wee Danny Walker sat at the scullery table. He'd been priggin on his mither tae let him oot guysin wi the ither loons an quines, seein this wiz Halla-even. But na, she jist wisna haein that ava; first sayin it's too freesty, then that he'd been aff skweel seek again an if Miss Wabster saw him gyan aboot at nicht he'd be getting his tatties.

Miss Wabster wiz affa gweed tae Danny and wid often come roon wi books for him tae read or maybe a sweetie for him aifter she'd feenished skweel.

Wee Danny wiz gye vrocht up though, insistin that he wiz aaricht noo. He nivver saw the deep sadness swype ower his mither's ee. She wiz lookin doon at his wee emaciated facie and the frail body that could barely keep him up. Since he'd teen the polio twa years ago he'd hardly growin ava. Ayee seek and poorly since, she'd watched her bairn turn fae a normal gyan aboot siven year aal that got up tae aa the tricks, tae the wee weak nine year aal that hid seemed tae stop growin aathegither.

Doctor Makadoork hid tellt her but last week that if he didna start eatin richt again that he'd as likely nae be aroon for his tenth birthday. Aathing Danny ait seemed tae come back up aifter a fyowe meenits.

His mither hoped that his body wid get some gweedness fae it in the meenits it wiz in his belly. A forlorn hope really because nae

maitter fit she did he wiz maistly seek. Lookin at him, her hert near burst. It wiz then she thocht tae let him oot wi the ither bairns. Wee Danny's facie fair lichted up and he gave her a big bosie and promisin her he'd come back hame the meenit he started tae feel naewel.

Wuppin him up in his cwite and scarf she let him jine the ither bairns that were beginnin tae gither on the streets. She shouted tae een o the neebour quines tae look aifter Danny and she promised she'd dee that. The ither bairnies githered aroon Danny and een o the aaler laddies handed him a neep lantern lichted wi a cannel wi a face cut intae it like a wee divilikie. He saw Danny's eyes fair licht up at this then the crowd o them left tae gyang doon the toon tae start guysin. Danny wiz pitten in the wee cairty alang wi the Guy and handed the neep lantern.

They wint fae door tae door askin for eether a penny for the Guy or else a peat tae or a bittie coal tae burn the Guy. In nae time Danny wiz surrounded wi peats, coal, aipples and even some bawbees that fowk threw in as they passed by. Danny wiz really enjoyin himsel and aa the banter and ongyans o the ither bairns shoving the cairtie an rinnin aboot.

Onyhoor aifter they'd been roon aa the doors in their bit o the toon, een o the bigger lads says that they should gyang up tae Linden Hoose at the tap o Duff street because a lady bade there that came fae London. Naebody hid ivver seen her apart fae in her cairriage wi the blinds pulled doon.

Danny hid eence seen the cairriage wi the driver dressed in a big cloak and weerin a lum hat while anither lad steed on a ledge at

the back o the cairriage dressed in the same kind o clyse. On the door wiz a drawing o a dragon wi a crown abeen it.

There wiz a bit o a debate amongst the bairns if they should gyang or no but eventually they decided tae gee it a shot. The consensus wiz they could only get chased awa and that wiz nae big thing. Danny got excited thinkin that he might get tae see a real lady, so wiz fair for gyan.

Haafwyes there though, he began tae feel seek and wiz shivering wi the caal. By the time they got tae the entrance some o the bairns started tae think better o't and were haein second thochts but the bolder o them pushed aheid up the drive. Danny, feelin gye seeky aboot the wyme, socht tae be let aff the cairtie but naebody heard him wi the scrunchin soond comin fae the wheels gyan up the chuckied drive.

He could see the big door wi ile lamps lichted at eether side castin their yella glow doon at the entrance. The cairtie stopped and a boorach o the loons and quines wint and chappit on the door.

Aifter a fair minty the door wiz opened by a tall lady. She smiled and invited aabody in. Danny bade sittin in the cairtie though because he wisna feelin up tae it.

The big door closed and Danny started tae rise fae the cairt thinkin tae himsel he'd wun awa hame. But the big door opened again and the lady came oot and spoke tae him.

"Don't you want to come in?" she asked.

Danny tellt her he wisna feelin affa weel so he'd jist hud awa hame.

She said, "Oh but your friends will be wondering about you?"

She smiled “I would like you to come in out of the cold. At least you can get a little heat in the kitchen?”

Danny shyly smiled and came oot o the cairtie but as he did so he stammered aboot a bittie he wiz that weak.

The lady took his haan saying, “My my you aren’t feeling very well.”

She led him through the fancy hoose and as they neared the kitchen he could smell fine food and the babble o his freens.

Fin they entered aabody looked up and smiled some sayin; “Come on Danny get stuck intae aa this fine mait.”

Though the smell wiz fine his stomach thocht itherwise but he teen a seat at the big table tae please aabody. The lady made a fuss o him and gave him a cake and a glaiss o lemon juice that the servant lassie teen inabout.

He wiz feart tae ait onything though fearin he’d jist pit it back up and there wiz naewye he wanted that fin aaabody wiz enjoying themsels so much. Tae please the lady he teen a nibble at the cake but even as it wiz jist in his mooth he fellt his stomach protestin so he teen a sip o the juice. Thanfully that sweeled it doon but he daurna tak anither bite fae the cake.

The lady saw this and crouched doon so she wiz at the same level as Danny.

She asked him kindly, “What would you like to eat more than anything in the world?”

Danny pondered a wee minty, takkin in how bonny the lady wiz and how the black severe dress she wore made her look like a real lady but it wiz the brooch on her neck that teen his attention. The

brooch wiz aboot the size o a haafcroon and on it wiz a reed cross.

He stammered a wee bittie as he tellt her fit he'd like tae ait mair nor aa the warld. It wiz fae a poem Miss Wabster hid gotten him tae read. It wiz by Lady Nairn and ae bit in it stuck in his memory; '*Chappit neeps and kail Jean, something sauft an sweet'*

So that's fit he tellt the lady. She lookit a bittie puzzled and waved een o the servant lassies ower that hid been takkin ben mair cakes.

She whispered something tae the lassie and she hurried throwe a door at the back o the room. A minty or twa later a big strushle wifie came throwe dichtin her haans on a cloot. Tae Danny she wiz obviously the cook by the big aapron that happit her. The lady tellt Danny tae repeat fit he'd jist said tae the cook.

The moment he said '*Chappit neeps and kail Jean, something sauft an sweet,*' the cook laached oot o her,

"Michty ma loon ye fairly ken fit's gweed for ye?"

She rabbit his heed and lookin at the lady said, "I'll awa and see fit I can dee for this hungry loon."

The lady smiled and left him as she wint tae spikk tae the rest o the bairns. Whether she understood the answers tae her questions neen wid ivver ken but she keepit spikkin awa and ivvery noo an then she'd laach, so she must be understandin some o fit wiz bein said, thocht Danny.

The door at the back o the room opened and in come the cook wi a tray and laid it in front o Danny wi a flourish sayin;

"Here's the dish Jean Armour made for Rabbie Burns- - -
"Chappit neeps and kail Jean, something sauft an sweet!"

She lifted the cover fae the dish and in it wiz bonny yell a chappit neeps and a pile o steamin kail. Aside it there wiz a wee bowie o cream. The cook poored a suppy o the cream ower the kail.

“Taste that ma loon!” says the cook wi a braid smile ontae her face.

Danny wi an, “Oh mighty!” started tae ait.

Aabody hid stoppit yappin awa tae watch him. Danny did feel a wee bittie self conscious but the fine taste o the mait seen made him forget aboot that.

The cook and the lady were staanin lookin at him an they were smilin like aabody else. As Danny feenished his mait, aa his freens cheered for although themsels only bairns they kent how desperately ill Danny wiz. A sea o smilin faces swamped him and o mighty the food felt so affa fine in his wyme.

Aifterhins they aa got a shillin apiece fae the lady and a pyoke o cakes and sweeties tae tak hame.

Danny keepit his shillin for as lang as he could, polishin it ivvery noo-an-then tae keep Queen Victoria shinin as bricht as possible. Eventually though, he gave it tae his mither for he kent fine that it wid come in handy tae her.

Doctor Makadoork eesed tae fyles come in by tae see him an wiz fair trickit fin Danny’s mither tellt him he wiz aitin like a wee horsie and that she could hardly keep tee with makkin him chappit neeps an kail.

“Good lad!” said the doctor as he teen some soundins fae Danny’s chest. “If ye keep up like this ye’ll seen be swingin fae trees again an getting up tae aa sorts o ill!”

Closin his bag, he tellt Danny's mither tae keep feedin him as she wiz and that if he keepit improvin that maybe he'd get back tae skweel aboot the spring o neist year.

But lookin at Danny wi a mock frown Doctor Makadoork said,
“Nae getting weet and keep weel wuppit up anent the caal!”

Danny's mither speired at the doctor foo muckle she owed him for aa the visits and medicines but he jist waved his haan.

“Dinna frett aboot that quine for the bill his been teen gweed care o by a lady!” the doctor replied.

Wi that he left sayin he'd ayee hae a look in by.

Miss Wabster came in by the neist day wi mair beuks for Danny an wiz fair ower the meen fin she saw how weel he wiz lookin.

She'd brocht him a special book caad ‘Hutchison's World of Wonder,’ a huge encyclopedia fulled tae breemin o facts and stories. Oh me but Danny wiz trickit wi this book and wid sit readin it for oors an oors.

He'd become a gweed reader in the time he'd been beddit but there wiz still a fair puckle o wordies that puzzled him. Luckily though the book hid loads o drawins and coloured plates, so a lot o the time they wid help him understand bitties even if he couldna pronounce the words.

But it wiz ae page he turned tae wi a coloured plate that gave him the shock o his life.

He jist sat starin at it till eventually he shouted oot, “Mam mam come an see this!”

His mither came throwe fae the scullery tae see fit he wiz

seekin. He held up the book tae her. She saw the paintin o a bonny woman dressed in a severe black dress huddin up a lamp. The caption read ‘Florence Nightingale the lady with the lamp.’

Danny lookin at her said, “That’s the lady fae Linden Hoose!”

His mither jist laached sayin, “Foo wid Florence Nightingale be in Macduff?”

But Danny wiz insistent.

“It is her! That’s how she wiz dressed and she wore that brooch wi the reed cross, that’s her, mam!”

His mither handed back the book but said nae mair and lookit affa deep in thought.

Then she smiled. “If you say it’s her then maybe she’s the een that made ye better?”

As she returned tae the scullery she muttered tearfully, “Thank you for my bairns life, Lady wi the lamp.”

Licht o Mornin.

Aal Geordie walked intae the chaamer at Hogland. The mornin sun wiz warm as it streamed throwe the windae wi it's lair o cobwebs and styoo and the sun cast a wee bittie o heat ontae his arthritic shooders. He stood an lookit aroon the aal chaamer, leanin heavily ontae his walkin stavve. His tired een took in the scene afore him. Dust lay thick on the fleer, an odds an eynes o lang redundant bits an bobs lay scattered aboot. It lookit for aa the world that somebody hid jist opened the door an heaved them in as if feart tae enter.

Fooivver, even that hid been deen mony a year afore because they were coated wi dust an dirt an lookit jist as forlorn lyin there as athing else in the room.

The furniture wiz still in place, that is if ye could caa it furniture. Twa bunks een on tap o tither, a chest o drawers and a puckle kists. The chest o drawers hid been time worn fin Queen Victoria hid been a young quine. Nae doot it hid been made by a local vricht.

Geordie smiled as he imagined tryin tae sell it tae een o yon funky antique dealers ye see on tv:

‘Yes sir! This is pure Buchan workmanship! See these saw marks? That’s authentic Jeemy jiner! Did you know sir that he also made cornkists an meal girnals?’

A strange hissin sound fulled the room, and if there’d been onybody else there they wid’ve seen Geordie laachin tae himsel.

Shakin his heed as if tae clear awa the image his attention turned tae the bunks.

They were made o sarkin boords the same as used on reefs and lookit for aa the world like giant fish boxes. The mattresses were still in them, cloot pyokes fulled o chaff fae the thrashin mull. He gave een a poke wi his stavve an it wint clean throwe the rotten cloot an intae the muchty chaff. Dust particles rose an flashed as they passed throwe the stream o sunlight fae the windae. Geordie waved his haan tae pit awa the styoo an is so deein steered up even mair.

The waas were lined wi the same sarkin boords that made the bunk an were butted thegither. At the jines, dust hid filtered throwe them and some o it clung tae cobwebs that hung aawye. It wiz this Geordie hid disturbed by wavin his haan aboot.

Movin awa tae the tither side o the room tae escape the dust, he stumbled ower some aal clyse an kitchen utensils an near wint his length ontae the fleer. A bittie fleggit, he lookit roon for something tae sit on. He saw in the corner fae the eyne o the bunks a big widden kist. Bit by bit he dragged it ower tae the sunlight.

The kist wiz o the type used by farmservants for huddin their goods & chattels. The kist wiz empty but Geordie kent fine fit wid've been intae it so many years ago. Gratefully, he sat doon ontae the kist. Wi a saich, he ficherded aboot in his jaicket pouch an teen oot his pipe an lit it aa the while mentally tickin aff the list o contents o the kist.

He muttered, “Sunday suit, gweed sheen, collars, studs, cuffs aboot twa o each, twa’r three pairs o leather thyangs for the beets, a tin o dubbin, maybe some siller an oh aye michtbe a bottle o fusky for medicinal purposes?”

The hissin sound fulled the room eence mair.

“Medicinal purposes” - - - !

Watchin the reek fae his pipe curlin up towards the reef timmers Geordie felt a great sadness come ower him. He kent that he'd been tryin nae tae think ower deeply but the memories o this very same room seemed tae loup oot at him fae ivvery dusty neuk an murmur tae his breest.

He'd last been in this room saxty three years afore, an sittin there he fairly felt that years. Time hid been relatively kind tae him though, even noo ye could see that he'd been a tall strong man weel used tae hard back brakkin vrocht. The haan that held the pipe wiz big an leathery, wi calluses near makkin the haan hardly able tae close richt.

Arthritis hid in the past puckle years laid its coarse haan ontae his braid shooders an as Geordie likit tae say aboot it- “It fair makks a budy claa fit's nae yokie!”

Although at aichtythree he'd nae complaints an wid be quick tae tell ye so.

Geordie let his mind wanner back throwe time, warily at first as if feart tae awaken the hame seek feelins in his breest. A feelin that hid plagued him throughoot his life, it wid catch him unawares at the strangest times. Smells and sounds would trigger it, new cut girss, the barkin o a dog in the distance, the clatter o denner dishes bein stackit, ony o that things wid be eneuch tae drag his mind back tae this room. If he alloed the feelins tae persist tears wid smart his een but wi the passin o time he'd learned tae forcibly control his emotions; until now.

This time the hissin sound wiz different, an the tears flowed. As he sat there solomentin the door swung open and a wee lassie o aboot ten entered and started tae say; “Grandfath- - -” but stoppit.

“What’s the matter grandfather, why are you crying?”

She wiz gye concerned an wint tae him.

“Oh nithing.” Geordie replied, “Jist a bittie o styoo got intae ma ee.”

“Grandfather don’t talk that funny way, I don’t understand what you are saying!”

She giggled and gave her grandfather a big hug.

“Mummy says it will soon be time to go and that the taxi is on its way to take you back.”

“Aye ma wee lamb gyang an tell yer mither I’ll be alang in a fyowe minties,” said Geordie kindly.

He saw the bonny wee facie braak intae a grin as she scolded him laughingly for speaking “In that funny way!” and aifter giein her granda anither great big hug she left tae tell her mither.

Geordie wiz left eence mair tae his thochts but instead o the past they were in the here an noo. The taxi wiz comin tae tak him back- “Aye tae tak ma back tae the home,” he muttered.

He shuddered at the thocht. They were gweed enough tae him there but the fowk jist didna understand him fin he spoke o his youth. This room kent though. It kent his ivvery feelin, ivvery memory, for this wiz the room that aifter a lang life always creepit intae his thochts. The fowk that hid passed throwe its muchty confines, their hopes, their loves, their fears aa were laid bare tae this room!

It wiz wantin a fyowe days afore the aal ‘November Term’ as

Geordie alloed his mind tae travel back saxty three years. His memory got sharper an sichts an sounds became clearer, the blanket o time slid back an in his mind's ee he'd returned.

The room wiz cleaner noo. Faar wiz the cobwebs? The chaff bed lookit nearly clean. He made tae lift his stavve tae gie it a powk but the door swung open an as he turned tae look for his grandochter's smilin facie tellin him the taxi's there. A face straacht fae the past met him.

He started an shouted the name o the man faa hid came in makkin sic a din.

“Gweed sakes is at you Bill Reid? Ye hivna changed a bit min!”

Geordie put oot his haan tae greet the ither man but found himsel completely ignored as the figure wint tae the windae an hunkered doon at a smaa kist Geordie hidna seen. Aifter some raikin aboot he came oot wi a horse brush an closed the kist. He watched Bill staan up an look throwe the windae an shout ower his shooder.

“It's still poorin doon oot there Geordie heavier than ivver! The grieve winna be best pleased aboot at?”

As he left the room he continued tae spikk in the same loud voice.

“We'd better be seein tae the horse afore he takks a blae fit aathegither!”

Geordie wiz mesmerised an muttered, “That couldna be Bill? He's but a young loon an onywye he wiz killed in the war!”

Rubbin his een an lookin aboot the room he began tae feel the first steerins o panic.

He thocht tae himsel that this wis how a budy first becomes dottled in the heed.

A lang forgotten smell began tae filter intae the room, an for a minty he couldna place it. Fin he did though, the hairs on the back o his neck fair birssed up, an he exclaimed oot o him -

“Horses!”

An in a whisper “We’re ower the stable here.”

The musty sweet smell o horses breath brocht a flood o memories that threatened tae overpower him aathegither.

He tried tae rise fae the kist but he couldna, an he began tae curse the arthritis in gweed pure Doric. As he struggled tae arise anither voice fae the past spoke softly tae him.

“Tak it easy Geordie min, ye’ll nae wun up that wye.”

Fin he lookit up his hert near missed a beat. There standin in aa her radiant beauty stood Violet Blair. She wiz lookin at him wi a saft wistful look in her een.

“Oh Geordie yer an aal mannie noo!” she exclaimed.

She teen his haan in hers an he could see the tears gither intae her een as she spoke again.

“Yer aal an frail wi the mark o pain etched in yer face. An fit’s happened tae yer bonny curly hair.”

Geordie at last managed tae spik an replied in a gye shakky falterin voice; “Oh yer as bonny as I mind Violet.”

And in a resigned tone he philosophically continued wi, “I’m fair amazed that as ye growe dottled in mind ye remember details lang forgotten!”

Violet smiled an said, “But yer nae dottled ava Geordie. I’m

really stannin here in front o ye. Can ye nae feel ma haans in yours?"

Geordie shook his heed.

"It canna be! Yer still young, an I'm aichtythree we were aboot the same age ye ken!"

She smiled an wipit a tear fae his ee as he repeated, "It canna be! It canna be?!"

He lookit up intae her facie, an stared at her for a lang time seein the real beauty o Violet as if for the first time. His aal tired weary een takin in ivvery part o her face as if terrifeart he'd lose the picture o his sweetest memory.

Doubtfully he stood and, as if expectin tae touch empty space, he reached oot an teen her intae his arms an held her close as sabbs wracked his work worn body.

"Why did ye nae let ma ken Violet?"

Mair sobs tore throwe him as he continued. "If ye'd tellt ma I wid've come for ye? Oh we wid've been happy thegither. I loed ye dearly quine!"

Violet stood awa fae him, an turned as if lookin oot the windae. Fin she spoke it wiz saft an hesitant.

"I – I didna ken fit tae dee-- I thocht o writin tae ye in the trenches an tellin ye aboot the bairn."

She turned at her ain words an said, "I wiz gan tae write an tell ye but word came back that ye'd been killed alang wi Bill Reid! Aifster that aathing wint wrang for me an the bairn."

Geordie waakin ower tae her an teen her tae his bosie as she tellt the rest o her story.

"The fairmer an his wife were affa gweed tae me an the bairn

but they hid tae sell the fairm an move awa. The new fowk that bocht it promised tae keep me on as kitchie but nae lang aifter takkin ower I wiz given my marchin orders. They widna hae a kitchie that wiz a slattern workin aboot the place. Ye see they were affa religious kindo fowk.”

She sabbit intae his bosie, “I tried for ither vrocht but naebody wid tak ma on because o the bairn.”

“Things got fae bad tae waer an eventually the Cruelty teen oor we laddie awa fae ma. Aifster that my hert wiz completely broken, as lang as I hid him I ayee hid a bit o you, he wiz the spittin image o his faither!” Through teerin sobs she tellt him the rest o the story.

“I wandered aboot an finally reached Aiberdeen mair deed than alive. I couldna get a job or even a reef ower ma heed and as illness teen it’s grip I must’ve snappit an threw masel aff the Union Street brig!”

She stared intae his een and continued, “Because o my deein that I’ve spent aa the years wanderin aboot this place. But I nivver found oot. Why this place? Why is it my spirit wanders here?”

Her voice wiz raised and as if jist realising it she added tenderly, “You’re the first person faa’s been intae this room in decades for aabody says this place is haunted.”

She gave the shadda o a smile at this an dichted her een wi the corner o her aapron.

Geordie gently teen up the story.

“I wiz wounded by the same shell that killed peer Bill. I didna mind muckle aifter bein hut, jist bitties here an there. I mind the French nurses dressin my wounds an bein lifted intae an ambulance

then ontae a boat.

Next thing I wiz in a military hospital in England. It wiz there I began tae fit things thegither an as I got better I fun oot I wiz in a place caad Colchester. They were affa gweed tae us. I wrote a lot o letters tae ye but they ayee came back wi ‘no one of this name lives here.

Aifter aboot fower months the doctor said I wiz fit enough tae be discharged. The army gave me three weeks hame leave an a travel warrant. I arrived in Aiberdeen aboot fower days later. The trains were jist affa an we were delayed ivvery fyowe miles because o aa the troop trains headin sooth.

Fan I got tae Aiberdeen, the Reed Cross weemin gave me a meal and an address o a hall that catered for wounded sojers hame on leave.

I’d a wander up fae the station haein a look intae the shop windaes an sic like fin an affa commotion set up at the heed o the hill. Being nosy kind I wint tae see fit wiz up. Fin I got there aabody wiz lookin ower the brig.”

Geordie faltered as if ower painful tae re-live.

“It wiz you Violet! O mighty me it wiz you lyin there aa broken on the rails!”

Sobs wracked him as he lookit intae her bonny facie. “I—

I’d missed ye by five meenits, five bliddy meenits!”

He sobbed again, an Kirsteen held him close wi the tears fleein fae her ana.

Geordie tried tae dicht awa her tears as he said, “Noo saxty three years hiv wun past an I’ve loved ye for ivvery five meenits in aa

that years.”

They were in eenanithers arms again lost tae the past. Aifter a while he cairried on wi his story.

“I tellt the policeman faa ye were an fae far aboot ye came. Aifter a fyowe days they’d traced doon fit hid happened tae ye an it wiz then I found oot aboot the bairn. I managed tae get ye beeriet in the aal kirkyard yonder wi a Christian beerial. The meenister wiz affa sympathetic fin I tellt him fit hid happened.”

Violet gasped oot, “So that’s why I’m here?” shakin her heed in understandin.

And wi a glance o admiration at Geordie she mummled, “Christian beerial!”

He nodded wiping awa her tears an cairried on.

“I wint tae see the bairn at the home an wiz promised by the Authorities that if I could provide a hame for him I’d get tae tak him fae their care.

I wiz discharged fae the army as unfit for active service, mind you I still dinna ken fit wye because at that time if ye could cairry a gun ye were fit for the slaachter. I didna think I wiz that unfit but I think that maybe my commandin officer hid something tae dee wi it for he gave me a job on his faither’s estate at the Cabrach. I got a hoose wi the job an found an aal woman tae keep hoose for me so I eventually got oor bairn back fae care.

Aifter the war my commandin officer gave me the gran job o estate keeper. Oor loon grew up fine an strong an workit alang wi ma till he emigrated tae Australia.”

He smiled at Violet.

"He's deen affa weel for himsel oot there an owns a big sheep fairm. He's heen twa o a faimily baith lassies an ilka year een o them comes ower tae see their granda."

Violet speired at him if he'd ivver thought o gyan oot there wi there loon? But na na, Geordie wid nivver leave. He ayee wanted tae be close tae her.

He said "I vrocht awa at the Cabrach until I retired a puckle years ago."

He teen a hud o Violet an speired at her if she'd seen the wee lassie that came in?

Aye she hid seen her and Geordie tearfully tellt her that wiz their great grand dochter hame fae Australia tae see him.

Violet's een brimmed wi tears as she thocht o the bonny wee lassie, she slowly an somehow knowingly speired her name.

"Violet" said Geordie, "An she's as like you as twa peys in a pod."

The door burst open - "Grandfath- - -!"

Geordie swung roon tae see her lookin at the lassie in her granda's arms.

"Wh- - - who's that grandfather? Who's the pretty lady an why is she crying?"

She looked at him wi puzzlement on her facie. Geordie tried tae explain fin Violet butted in;

"I'm the lady that cleans here and I must have got dust in my eyes. Your grandfather was trying to take it out for me. Would you take a look at it for me because I don't think your granda can see too well?"

Violet picked the bairn up and wint tae the windae sayin,
“There’ll be more light here.”

Violet managed tae get tae cuddle her great gran bairn as she lookit intae her een for the dust.

She couldna see onything sayin, “Granda must’ve got it all out.”

Violet sighed as she let the bairn go. A lifetime she’d been alloed tae touch for the briefest o moments.

The wee lassie said tae Geordie, “The taxi’s coming now grandfather, we’ll take you home.”

“Aaricht tell yer mither I’m jist comin,” he said kindly.

Pittin her hands ontae her hips in mock anger, she said “Grandfather! Don’t talk funny! I jist dinna understan ae wird yer spikkin!” And wi a giggle she ran oot o the room.

“She’s learnin the Doric weel fae ye,” said Violet smilin. “Aye,’ says Geordie, “But I’ll bet her great grunny could teach her it much better!”

Eence mair they were in eenanither’s arms. Michty but Geordie wiz sweered tae let go o her but Violet tellt him they’d be thegither again soon.

* * *

The taxi came for Geordie an teen him back tae the home and aifter a special hug fae his grandochter he said his farewells, but nae afore Violet said she’d seen her grandfather holding a young cleaning lady in his arms. Aabody laached at this because they kent the fairm wiz derelict an hid only teen an aal man tae see faar some o his youth hid been spent afore the bulldozers moved in.

Violet knew she'd nivver see her greatgranda again. She didna ken how she knew but fin she lookit at Geordie she wiz happy for him and ran back for one last cuddle and whispered;

"I love you granda! Tell the pretty lady to take good care of you!"

This is my dying day.

The sojer lay gaspin wi the pain. The wind hid been knocked fae him as the bullet pierced low doon in his left side. He'd fell intae the big shell hole he'd been tryin hard tae avoid fin the bullet hut.

"Jesus Christ the fuckin pain!"

He tried tae move a wee bittie so he could see the damage but seering agony passed throwe his guts and made him gasp. Instead he put his hand doon tae feel the wound. He blew throwe clenched teeth as his fingers touched the wound. Thank fuck his puddens hidnae spilled oot! It wiz jist a wee hole made by a bullet and nae a shrapnel wound. That wid've opened him like a bliddy kipper.

He gasped again as he reached for his TOS bunnet and pushed it doon between the tap o his kilt and the hole in his guts tae staunch the bleed. He weel kent he'd need tae pit pressure on it, so bit by agonising bit he turned roon so he lay ontae the wound. As he groaned, he slowly calmed his breathin doon and found in so deein the pain seemed tae ease aff a bittie. But if he moved a fraction the searin agony came back wi a vengeance. He tried his best tae think the pain awa by mindin back hame but for some reason he jist couldna get that image tae hud in his mind.

He listened instead tae the sound o battle abeen him. But it sounded so far awa. Lying as he wiz in a big shell crater, the noise seemed distorted; a bit like the dull sounds in deep snaa. Noo an then the brrrr brrr and shuzz shuzz shuzz o machine-gun fire wid come

doon tae him fae abeen. Sound playin tricks...?

He pulled his left leg up a bittie as he lay on his side. Christ, but it wiz fuckin sair. He tried again tae will the pain awa intae the background. Jist as things began tae ease he vomited. Coughin and splutterin atween gasps o screamin agony, he felt as if the shudders were comin fae deep inside his soul. Aiftherhins he'd tae gyang throwe the whole sequence again o getting a position that the pain wiz bearable. He lay still and daurna move an inch. He didna want tae kittle aa fuckin thing up eence mair.

The stink o rotten eggs fae the high explosive and his ain spewins waffted aroon him, makin him near boak again but he controlled it by breathin through his mooth.

Eence mair he attempted tae think aboot hame and the crops beginning tae ripen in the fields but the image fell awa like snaa fae a dyke tae be replaced by the stinkin shell hole.

Close by he could hear Jerrie stonkers (stick grenades) gan aff and hoped tae fuck yin widna land in his shell hole. That wid cow-the-gowan richt enough if yin came in tae keep him company. He curled up but nae wi the thocht o stonkers, but by the gut wrenchin pain teerin throwe him in waves.

It teen much much langer this time tae get intae a comfortable position. So he put his hand doon tae check the wound and thanked fuck that the bleedin seemed tae hae stoppit. That slight movement caused even mair pain and he lay writhin and gaspin in pure agony.

“Oh dear Christ is this how it’s gan tae be?”

This time though the pain didna stop ava but keepit twistin intae his guts. Eence mair he started tae boak and that made things

even worse. He coughed up mair rubbish and saw it wiz a reed colour. He wiz really fucked noo! He'd seen plenty men die o gut wounds afore and usually they vomited bleed at the end.

He lay gaspin as waves o weakness passed throwe him. Resigned tae the end he teen a closer look at his ain teemins and saw it wisna bleed ava? That mornin him and his mates hid eaten a tin o plum jam and hard tack for braakfast. Hope surged throwe him fin he realised this and muttered;

“I’m still in wi a chance here, thank fuck!”

Tryin eence mair tae think aboot hame tae tak his mind tae a better place but hame didna latch on ava. His mind wiz in war and it seemed he’d nivver kent onything else. Faces swam in front o him but nae the eens he wanted. Aa he could see wiz sojers, some laachin, ithers greetin for their mithers some jist dying and Big Rab Stewart tellin him how tae gyang ower the tap.

Accordin tae Rab, eence ye wint ower the tap ye stood up as straacht as ye could and had tae hud the butt o yer rifle ower yer bawsacks. The Jerrie machine-guns were set at twenty one inches abeen the grun so that the chances were that if ye got hut, the bullets wid mair than likely hit yer legs and nae yer bawsacks or puddins. Rab wint on tae say that if a bullet did hit yer rifle butt then it widna be neen worse than a kick in the cods. That wiz Rab’s theory onywye.

Here the sojer lay, wi a bullet jist abeen an tae the left o his groin and it wiz fuckin agony. Rab hid patted him on the back and wi a cheery look said;

“Ye can live athoot a lot o bitties o yer body but nae athoot yer shot pooch or piece!”

Well here he wiz lyin in a big fuckin shell hole, wi his bawbag still attached but wi a bullet intae his gungapooch and a shattered rifle butt. Jesus! Thinkin aboot it brocht the pain back tae the fore!

He could hear big shells landin a fair bittie awa and the baff sound as the air pressure passed ower his shell hole. Some shoutin and the trrrrap trrrrap o a British maxim, then followed by the faster brrrr brrr o the Jerrie gun. This wint on for a gweed fyowe minutes, mair voices and the heavy bump o Mill's bombs gan aff.

The sound o feet abeen him and gruntin as twa kilties came intae his shell hole. For a second he thocht they might be Jerries. They were gye grim faced and oot o breath. They cairried a streecher wi them.

Een said, "Aye min yer in a bit o a sotter!"

They rolled him ower ontae his back that fast he'd only time tae gasp throwe his teeth as the pain tore through his guts. Een o them looked at the wound and put on a huge field dressing an said;

"Yer lucky pal anither couple o inches higher and I'd call ye deed!"

The sojer through clenched teeth replied, "Anither couple o inches lower and I'd call masel Mary!"

Gordon's Thornton Bye-Way Mkiii pushbike.

Gordon Robb wiz makin his wye tae Maud station fae the Cyack. He wiz gye vrocht up wi himsel wi excitement, for this wiz a lang socht day for him. There wiz a bittie o a nip in the air but wi aa the ongyans he hardly noticed it ava. Onywyne he wiz weel wuppit up weerin his faither's aal army greatcwide fae the war. Threedbare an mair norr a bittie waarr o the weer it might be but it hid seen his faither fae the landins in Anzio richt tae the war's eynd, an still managed tae haap Gordon an keep him warm.

Gordon vrocht at the peat moss aside the Hash o Fyachty aboot twa miles oot o the Cyack. He'd been there syne he left the skweel jist at the hinner eyne o the war and ivvery penny he could save wiz pittin intae his Post Office savings bank. Gordon nivver drank, smoked norr wint tae dunces, in fact he spent very little siller ava athing wiz for his savings bank. He'd amassed the smaa fortune o £27-13/6d an that wiz mair than enough tae buy his dream bike a Thornton's Bye-Way MKiii; wi a three speed gear wheel, a set o tools and a Smiths Pathfinder dynamo driven set o lichts.

Nae mair cairryon ficherin wi carbide lamps an the blackoot cover as he'd deen durin the war. Na na! Noo aa that he'd tae dee wiz flick the dynamo anent the back wheel and licht up the road afore him like a searchlicht. Leastwyes so the advert said.

Gordon rabbit his fammils wi the thocht o getting a go on the bike in the dark. He'd phoned that mornin fae the fairm tae Maud station tae see if his bike hid arrived as promised. Fin he'd ordered it

fae the Army & Navy stores in London they'd tellt him that it wid nott twintyacht days for delivery eence his Postal Order hid cleared. Oh mighty!

As he neared Maud he pit a faister fit aneth him, an or the time he saw the station he wiz fair knypin on. Near rinnin if the truth be tellt! Fin he wun intae the station there wiz a great boorach o railway workers staanin roon something yappin awa and pyntin. He wint inabout the crowd and he saw it wiz 'HIS' bike they were pynitn at an mighty they were fair teen w't.

As he got nearer he jist managed tae catch some o fit wiz bein said.

"I nivver thocht in aa ma life that I'd get this close tae a Thornton's Bye-Way Mkiii sportin a Smith's Pathfinder lamp driven by a dynamo!"

The man lookit aroon the ithers and says, "Faivver bocht this bike maun be affa weel tae dee?"

Hearin this Gordon's heedy fair rockit face side tae side and he pulled a kindo conceited face and his tap lippy hung doon like a coconut mooth. He stood listenin tae fit the lads were sayin aboot 'HIS' bike an mighty they were that impressed.

Gordon's chesty fair stuck oot as he thocht o aa the deemies the country roon that wid be wantin tae hurl ontae the haanlebars. Wi a bike like the Thornton's Bye-Way Mkiii, they'd be throwin themsels at him nae handy! Oh mighty!

Wi that thochts aboot weemin throwin themsels at him Gordon he wint richt inabout tae the boorach o fowk tryin tae walk as he thocht the owner o a Thornton's Bye-Way MKiii should walk.

Instead he could hardly walk for pride, an lookit mair like a puppet on a towe.

The lads steed aside fin he tellt them he'd come for his bike and for the first time he got a richt look at his dream machine. There it wiz gleamin like glaiss, the maroon pint that reed an deep that the late freesty sun glintid aff o it that a budy wid've noott a pair o sun glaisses tae look at it.

‘Oh mighty!’

His een caressed it as if a bar nyakit umman lyin on a cooch. He noted the Smith's Pathfinder lamp that wiz said tae cut its wye throwe pickmirk an mak nicht intae day and the dynamo that wiz promised tae laist a lifetime.

The wheels! Oh me! They were made oot o roostproof steel and they like the lamp were meant tae laist a lifetime.

‘Oh mighty me!’

The wee toolboxy wiz fixed aneth the saddle seat and contained aa the tools a budy micht noott for repairs.

His fammil wint oot tae touch the bike and he muttered, “Nae that I'll be needin tools, for this is a Thornton' Bye-Way MKiii the Rolls o the pushbike world.”

Signin the delivery dockit he thankit the station maister an wi a wave tae aa the envious railway fowlk he teen his leave. He didna mount the bike though his knees were ower weak for that and he wisna seekin tae mak a feel o himsel aathegither by wabblin aboot gyan throwe the gates.

Gordon wyted till he wiz weel oot o sicht o the station afore he mounted. In nae time he wiz bombin alang usin the three speed wheel

tae gweed effect. Instead o huddin the wye back tae the Cyack as hid been his intention he held ower the New Deer wye tae show his cousins there his spankin new bike and mak them jealous.

Michty though, Gordon wiz trickit wi his bike for it ran like a Singer shooin machine smooth and easy.

‘Oh me!’ thocht he.

His auntie and uncle bade at the tap eyne o New Deer but instead o haein tae come aff the bike for the hill as he’d tae dee wi his aal yin he jist flickit the gears for the brae and wint up it athoot a pech. He turned doon the lane aside his uncle’s an as luck wid hae it he wiz dailin the back yard.

Michty fitna show Gordon made as he drew inabout. In nae time ava he wiz surrounded wi his uncle, aunty, cousins an a fair puckle o the neebours.

Ae me sic ongyans!

Gordon baskin in the glory tellt them this and that aboot the bike rattlin aff the specifications like a manual aa the while watchin that naebody actually pit a fammil ontae ‘HIS’ bike. A couple o fammils did try tae touch it but Gordon smacked them awa.

His uncle wiz impressed wi the Smiths Pathfinder lamp sayin it wid save a fortune on batteries. Gordon, seek it wisna dark enough yet for a show, came up wi an idea an speired his uncle tae open the gairden shed. Coverin the wee windae wi his greatcwite tae shut oot the licht him and his uncle wint intae the shed wi the bike an shut the door.

Gordon flickit the dynamo anent the back wheel put the bike up on its stand an gave the pedal a gweed caa. Michty the shed

lichted up as if he'd jist put up a searchlicht. Nae peelywally battery
lichts here! Na na this wiz the real thing!

There wisna an affa lot o room in the shed so he teen abody in
twa at a time so he could gie them a show. Mighty but the licht wiz
that strong he thocht he smelled singeing cobwabs that hung aboot
the corners o the sheddie.

They were aa suitably impressed by Gordon's bike and aifter a
cuppy o tay and a piece, he teen his leave tae mak his wye hame tae
the Cyack. His aunty as usual made a fuss makkin sure he'd his aal
greatcwite weel wuppit aboot him and that he wore his balaclava tae
keep oot the githerin freest hae his lugs.

Gordon waved tata, an set sail for the Artamfoord road. Eence
he left the toon he put his bike up intae third gear and in nae time he
wiz fair knypin on. Turnin doon ontae the Artamfoord road proper the
shadas o githerin darkness made for a richt eerie hurl so he leaned
back an flickit the dynamo anent the back wheel an mighty but the
road afore lichted up like day.

By the time he drew level wi the ruins o Fedderate castle nicht
wiz weel doon and even wi the bricht licht fae his lamp, Gordon wiz
beginin tae regret takkin this road hame. He mind on some o the
stories aboot Fedderate castle. It wiz said the Deil hid biggit it in ae
nicht for tae entice men tae the gates o Hell an mony wiz the story
aboot fowk dissapperin nivver tae be seen again.

Some fowk said that on certain nichts o the year aboot the time
o nae moon ye could see ghostly lichts flickerin aboot the ruined
windaes as Aal Nick himsel entertained aa the souls he'd teen tae a
banquet o roasted unsained bairns. For a second Gordon thocht he'd

seen a flicker at een o the windaes.

This made Gordon pit on a spurt o speed. His leggies started tae pump like twa steam pistons tae wun by the castle as fast as he could. That's fin he felt the haan ontæ his shooder then the second haan on the ither yin and they started tae pull him backwyes.

Gordon whimpered and caa'd the bike even harder. Aal Nick wiz ontæ his hump an the harder he caa'd the harder Aal Nick pulled. He could feel owl'd leathertail's hot breath on the back o his neck and as he wiz bein slowed doon the lichty on his bike grew dimmer an dimmer till eventually it wint oot and Gordon and his bike cowpit intæ the ditch at the roadside.

The ditch wiz half full o water and Gordon wiz makin an affa spleeter tae wun awa but nae a move could he mak. Gordon jist lay there makkin a crooin sound as he smelled the smell o Hell's fire an breemsteen waft aboot the back o his neck.

Gordon by this time wiz way beyond screamin and jist crooned an whimpered like a bairn. A thoosand thochts passed throwe his heed an nae yin o them gave him one bit o hope. It wiz Hell's fires for him, nae doot aboot that ava.

He wiz terrifeart tae look ower his shooder nae wantin tae see intæ the face o his ain damnation. He groaned oot o him as the smell o sulphur breath reekit roon his heed. He started a primeval wailin interspersed words o nae sense. Slaivers were dreepin fae his slack hingin mooth as he wailed an blubbered. Slowly his words became clearer an if onybody o this world hid been there tae hear them they wid've heard.

"Ahhh God-ova-Jesus Owld Nick let ma go, let ma go!"

A big slavery sooch backwyes then, “I’m a good laddie ask ma mither she’ll tell ye, I’m a good laddie!”

Anither slavery sooch but this time wi a big saich ana then, “Ahhhhh meeee!”

Frantic tae get awa Gordon started tae offer Aal Nick souls a plenty, even offerin up his New Deer cousins for starters. He even named them aa an tellt Aal Nick far aboot they bade. This got nae response apart fae a waft o sulphur breath, so he offered him his auntie and uncle ana as a sweetener. Nae response! Aa the while the haans keepit a gweed grip ontae his shooders an the wafts o Hell’s breath makin him cowk.

Realisin he wisna gan tae get free this wye Gordon started tae recite the Lord’s prayer, leastwyes as muckle o’t as he could mind.

“Our Father who art in Heaven something? Be thy name, something? Something? Be thy name- glory- something else?- amen!”

He wished noo that he’d listened tae the silly aal bugger o a meenister at skweel- - - oops! He put a haan tae his mooth at the blasphemy aboot the meenister as if tae tak it back an started prayin eence mair and crossin himsel as he saw them dee in films.

His fammils were gan like a winmill and he made mair signs o the cross than ivver were on the Apennine Way. He didna ken if he wiz deein it richt but held gyan onywye an syne started tae sing hymns. Well nae hymns actually but ae hymn. The only yin he kent wiz ‘Jesus loves me’ so he gave it lalldie his voice heich wi terror. A budy might’ve heard it as far as New Deer if the ween hid been blawin the richt wye. Aifter a gye whilie o this he broke doon eence

mair intae tears an slavers that were fleein like strings.

Calmin doon a bit Gordon started tae treat his predicament as a confessional, an blurbbed oot lang forgotten illdeecins o himsel and ither. He shoppit fowk left richt an centre. If Aal Nick hid gotten aa the souls promised at ae go he wid've hin tae bigg a new anex tae Hades. By this time Gordon hid started tae rin oot o steam an jist lay in the watery ditch pantin an sabbin wi terror.

Aifter a gye whilie though he began tae jalouse that the Devil's haans though still huddin him ticht hid nivver moved ava throwe aa this cairryon. Gettin braver Gordon he put up een o his shakkin haans up tae touch his shooder expectin aa the while tae feel Aal Nick's leather fammils but aa he fellt wiz the epaulettes o his great coat and fin he put up his haan tae the ither shooder wi the same result.

"Nae fammils!" He gasped oot.

"Thank fu- - - I mean God!"

By this time Gordon, getting even braver, turned his heed.

"Nae reed burnin yaks?"

He wint weak and blurted oot "Oh thank feck!"

That's fin he noticed the tail o his cwite wuppit aboot the back wheel.

"Oh jumpin Jesus, for the love o Christ min! Sic a bliddy feel!"

He started tae curse like a trooper as he undid the cwite fae the wheel. Aa his new found religious bent noo forgotten, as he swore for a full twenty five meenits athoot repeatin himsel eence while addin plenty o blasphemous wordies tae the mix ana. The aal meenister fae

his schooldays got mony o them aimed at him personally an are so bad I daurna print them here. Well well, than!

Noo ye might be thinkin that's an end tae it? The story I mean! But na na, nae quite yet. If ye hae a wee traipse by the Artamfoord widdies an wun roon by Fedderate castle o a freesty November's nicht might be ye'll see the glimmer o a bricht licht comin fae the intimmers o the aal castle waas? An if yer brave enough hud yer wye inaboot tae Fedderate's ruins an shout oot;

“G O R D O N!” a couple o times.

He'll come oot fae the intimmers and if he finds ye deservin he'll gie ye shotty o his Thornton's Bye-Way MKiii bike alang the owld causeway there that leads tae ‘nae wye in particular.’

And if he's kinichted wi ye he'll let ye hud gyan on the road tae ‘nae wye in particular’ an doon by tae see me his Maister.

“Oh it's fine an warm doon here- - - ask Gordon he'll tell ye!”

The Felshee.

I wiz sittin ae forenicht on the steps o the remembrance tower at Canker's Knowe last summer, lookin doon ower Macduff and beyond intae the Firth. It wiz like a picter postcard. The sea hid the colour o carnation milk and nae a breeze disturbed it. It wiz a fine saft nicht as I sat there wi my notebook, writin a story as usual, fin a voice speired ma if I wiz sketchin. I looked up and saw a man maybe in his late twenties lookin doon at ma.

"Na ma loon I couldna sketch tae save ma life!" says I.

And lookin ower the Firth I said, "Though wi sic a bonny view I wish I could!"

He laughed and agreed how bonny wiz the view. I tellt him I wiz writing wee stories aboot Macduff and the North East. He seemed interested an speired ma fit kind o stories.

"Well, ony wee strange tales aboot folk-lore or ghosts or sic like written in the Doric," I tellt him.

This really teen his attention and he sat doon aside ma.

Wi a thoughtful look ontae his face he said, "Div ye want tae hear a really strange story aboot Macduff?"

Always on the ootlook for tales my luggies gave a bit o a waggle and of coorse I says;

"Aye!"

He teen fae his inside pooch o his jaicket a photograph and handed it tae me. It wiz aboot the size o a standard postcard. There wiz a great boorach o geets standin and some sittin in a familiar

place. A puckle o the them were dressed up fancy clyes like they were in a period drama ithers were dressed in aalfarrant clyes maybe o the twenties. I flipped ower the photo and on the back written in faded ink it said ‘Christmas party 25th of December 1922 at Macduff Town Hall.

Well there’s far the ‘familiar’ bit came. I thocht I’d recognised it.

I handed it back sayin, “That’s a cracker o a photo min! I bet naebody in it his got a sair heed the day?”

He jist smiled and nodded. Then pointin tae some o the fowk in the photo he began tae name them. As he wint throwe the names he’d ivvery noo an then pint backwards wi his thoom at the remembrance tower and tell ma faar this een or that een wiz killed in the second war.

I thocht tae masel, ‘Noo this lad kens his local history.’

I could think o fyowe o my aal school pals faa wid like a wee news wi this lad. This is aa very weel kennin names but it wiz the next bit that teen the ween fae ma sails.

He said that jist tae the left o the photo oot o shot there wiz trestle tables an benches faar the bairns hid jist feenished aitin soup, tatties and breid made by the wiffies fae the soup kitchen up in High street. Aa the geets hid been given an orange for their puddin. The meal hid been peyed for by the Macduff Toon Cooncil as a gift tae the bairns. Many o them hid lost their faithers in the Great War.

He spoke the Doric richt enough but wi that safter accent o a man that’s been abroad for many years. That kind o accent is pretty common among deep sea sailors or military men that hid tae get

themsels understood. Onywyne he gid on giein me even mair details aboot that party so many years ago even pointin oot that the wee bitties o something lyin scattered aboot the fleer bein peelins fae the oranges. This lad could spin a tale richt enough.

He said the bairns in the photo dressed up in period clyes hid been actin a Christmas Carol fae Dickens and ither wee plays, and they'd been affa gweed.

I'll write the rest o the story as he tellt it. I jotted it doon usin my ain form o shorthand and only noo an then getting him tae repeat something as I fell ahin.

*

He started in his soft Doric:

"Aifter the party abody wint their ain wye hame. It wiz mid aifterneen so I'd a wee wander aboot the harbour. There wisna muckle gyan on so I decided tae wun my wye hame.

Instead o cuttin ower tae Tarlair street far I bade I thocht tae masel I'd hud up Duff street then head ower hame on time for supper. Gyan up the street I saw lichts on in Craigdhu Hoose. It wiz usually aa shuttered up because the fowk that owned it bade doon sooth somewye. At least that's fit the locals said and only on very rare occasions did they bide there.

As I drew level wi Craigdhu, I saw a laddie aboot the ages o masel playin in the front gairden o the hoose wi a widden top. He could fairly mak it stot and kept it spinnin wi a short bit o stick gien it a tap noo-an-then.

He wiz affa posh dressed in tweeds, nae like me wi an aal hand-me-doон gansey, short breeks, een o ma faither's aal bunnets on

ma heed an roch made soutar's sheen. He wore a suit wi lang breeks and fancy licht broon beets wiz a shine on them like a mirror. He'd a collar an tie and wore a cap made wi the same material as the suit. He looked up at me and smiled but fin he did that he lost control o the top and it wupped aboot for a minty, then stopped.

"Would you like to try it?" he askit o me.

He spoke the same wye as een o my teachers at skweel. She tellt us she came fae Edinburgh. So that's far the fowk o the hoose must come fae.

In nae time I wiz tryin my hand at makin the widden top spin but I couldna dee it as weel as he could. We were getting a gweed laach ivvery time I did it wrang an spun it awa aa ower the place. We were haein sic gweed fun fin the big door o the hoose opened and a really bonny woman came oot.

She said the laddie's name "Charles you'd better come..."

That's fin she noticed me and said, "Hallo."

She'd the same smilin een as the laddie and she seemed tae be fair chuffed fin Charles tellt her we'd been having such good fun. She asked me if I'd like to come in for supper wi Charles. I wisna too sure though for they were affa posh.

It wiz Charles that insisted I come in, and that he'd let ma see his wind up train aifter supper. Still a bitty reluctant though, I'd a quick look doon at my clyse and the bonny lady saw me and laughed.

"Don't worry about having your play clothes on just come in as you are."

Play clothes? Mighty but this wiz my best. I didna tell her that though.

Through the big door there wiz tiles deen in the shape o a shield on the fleer wi fancy writin on it and a big copra mat for dichtin yer feet afore ye stood on the tiles. Against the left waa wiz a big stand wi coats an hats hung ontill it and a whole rack o different walkin sticks. Fae the ceilin hung a hale load o glaiss globes and Charles tellt ma they were electric lights fin he saw my amazement. This wiz the closest I'd ivver been tae an electric light. We'd only gas lamps in Tarlair street, wi their greeny peelywally licht. This licht wiz bricht as day.

A young lassie dressed in black wi a white frilly apron and a wee hat on her heed teen me and Charles intae fit she caad the 'Dining-room.' There wiz a massive table in the middle o the fleer covered wi a white tablecloth and ontae it there wiz places set wi plates forks, knives an speens by the dizzen. On the centre o the table were great big bowels o a different kinds o fruit. We sat doon far we were showed and the servant lassie left us.

A couple mintys later the bonny lady and a man entered and came up tae speak tae ma. He'd the same smiling eyes as the lady and I could see at a glance that he wiz Charles' dad. Fin he spoke it wiz affa posh. I dinna ken if he understood me fin I answered his questions but he smiled and said tae Charles to look after our special guest before sittin doon at the heed o the table. The bonny lady sat at the ither eyne. A fyowe mintys later twa servant quines came in an laid big plates o food in front o us. I wiz lickin my lips wi anticipation as the man said grace.

On the plate affront ma there wiz roast beef wi dumplin, roast tatties, neeps, carrots and wee green things that looked for aa the

world like wee cabbages. Charles tellt ma they were caad Brussel's Sprouts. A gweed lash o gravy on tap and we got stuck in.

Nae kennin fit fork an knife tae use I jist copied Charles. Tae this very day I've nivver eaten a better meal. Aifsterhin we got a big slice o aipple pie wi cream on't, pure heaven.

Aifter we'd hid oor mait the servant lassies came in and started tae clear awa the dishes. Charles' dad said that us gents would retire to the library, and ushered us through the hoose.

Enterin the library wiz something else. Each waa apart fae the door and fireplace hid raas o shelves each fulled wi books. Many o them were leather-bound and must've cost a fortune. A lot o the books looked as if they were medical or maybe law. Well, fitivver they were I couldna read the words. The man looked doon at me wi his smilin een nae doot seein foo my een hid lichted up then asked

“Do you like books?”

I nodded my heed and sayin I suppose in wonder that I'd nivver afore seen this muckle books in my life. He laughed an speired if I wiz a good reader?

I shook my heed.

“Nae really but if I'd books like this I wid be!”

Again he laughed and rubbed ma heed as he wint tae the big table at the end o the room and poored himsel a drink fae a decanter afore lightin up a cigar and sittin doon.

Charles wiz at ma tae come and see his train. It wiz set oot on a track at the far corner the room. We played awa as the man enjoyed his cigar and drink. It only seemed mintys later fin een o the servants came in and announced tae the man that athing wiz ready in the

dining room.

Back through, the table hid been cleared. Instead o fancy tablecloths the surface wiz jist varnished wid that looked as if a body wid be able tae see their face in it. In the centre there wiz a fyowe wee widden boxes wi numbers and symbols on them and next tae that a big green baize cloot hid been set oot and a fit looked like a black horn cup on it. Aside the cup were twa dice een wi numbers and the ither wi strange symbols like on the wee boxes.

The man laughingly tellt us tae tak oor seats. I could see Charles wiz fair excited and fin aa the servant lassies came in they looked excited ana.

The lady and the man shouted oot a name and that person came and sat doon in front o the green cloot. They'd tae pit the dice intae the cup rattle it aboot then roll the dice ontae the green cloot. Each person hid tae dee this three times as the man teen notes fae each roll o the dice. This wint on until my name wiz called and abody githered there wiz tellt I wiz the special guest o Charles. Abody hid smilin een as they watched me roll the dice. The man duly noted the score then handed the note book ower tae the lady. She quickly tallied up at the side o each name and handed ower een o the wee widden boxes tae that person. The boxes wid've been aboot the size o a pencil case wi a lid that slid oot so ye could use it as a straight edge.

As each person got their box they opened it wi great excitement, some got jewelery ither got siller. Then it came tae my turn and fin I slid the lid aff inside wiz a croon or five shilling piece tae them that disna mind on them.

Fair chuffed, I thanked the folk but the man put up his hand

sayin;

“No need to thank us for you won it fair and square!”

He came inabout and teen the lid fae my box and turned it ower. It hid strange writin on it and abody gasped fin they saw it. The man tellt ma it wiz a ‘Felshee’ and that I’d tae keep it about my person at all times. I asked the obvious question

“Fit’s a ‘Felshee’????” Abody laughed at this and I could see abody hid smiling eyes.

The man put his hand ontae my shooder and said, “Time will tell!”

Aifter I got hame I gave my mither the croon and tellt her I’d found it. She wisna that pleased and, even though a croon tae her wiz a windfall, she keepit at ma faar about I got it. I kent nae tae tell her about the fine fowk, so I thocht on tellin a lee that I’d found it on the street. But she wid've put me straacht tae the police station tae hand it in thinkin some peer aal craiter hid lost it. So I tellt her I found it doon aside the harbour atween high and low water. Now that here in Macduff is believed tae be a gift fae the ‘Gweed Fowk’ o the sea.

* * *

I grew up, and bein born in 1910 I wiz aal enough tae fecht in the second war, so I sailed on a drifter sweepin mines up at Scapa.

My father hid been on drifters during the Great War but hid been killed in the Aegean in the same action that Joseph Watt fae the Broch hid earned the Victoria Cross or Skipper Watt as abody kent him.

Unlike my father, I survived my war and aifterhins came back tae Macduff and resumed the fishin. It wiz about 1950 afore I realised

that something wiz wrang wi me. At the age o forty I still looked twenty and fowk that were at skweel wi ma began tae mak comments aboot this. I wiz getting worried kind masel tae tell the truth and my mind always wint back tae that Christmas day so lang ago and the man tellin me aboot the ‘Felshee’ and that ‘Time wid tell.’

I’ve always kept it wi ma as he tellt ma tae. Eventually by the mid fifties I’d tae leave Macduff aathegither. I came back in the 1980s and jist tellt fowk I wiz the son o the man they kent. It looks tae me as if I’ll hiv tae move on again for a puckle years and come back eence mair as my ain son in a couple o decades.”

*

I finished scribblin as I caught up wi the yarn.

I said tae him “Michty loon but that wiz jist a cracker o a story!” Then I asked, “How did ye manage tae mak that yin up?”

He smiled at me wi sic sadness in his een as he teen oot fae his pooch fit looked like a ruler and handed it tae me. It wiz weel worn but I could kindo mak oot strange writin on it.

I handed it back wi ae question, “Felshee?”

He nodded, sayin he’d showed it tae a couple o scholars years afore that kent ancient languages but they didna ken the words, but one hid heard aboot a legend that the ancient gods could grant immortality tae the ‘winner o the game,’ by awardin them wi a ‘Felshee’ - fin I tellt him the name.

He said tae me wi great sadness in his voice, "Wid you tak a Felshee if ye were offered een?"

I'll pit the same question tae you the reader.

“Wid you tak a ‘Felshee’ if offered?”

I
passed.

Henny Harper.

heard this story fin I wiz but a bairn. The man that tellt it tae ma lies restin in the kirkyard as he's deen for mair norr fifty years

Henny Harper wiz a buck (tramp) that eesed tae range the country roon as the fancy teen him. Tae earn a crust he'd sharpen knives, shears an ither kinds o ficherins.

Henny wisna his Christian name, nae a sowel kent that. The reason he wiz caad Henny; he'd a wee roon heed that darted aboot as he haaf focused on the warld aboot him jist like a henny lookin for a morsel. He'd amber coloured een on him and this added tae the likeness o hen.

It wiz said that he'd been trainin as a meenister o the cloth in his youth an wiz as bricht as a braiss button. Ae time he'd come hame tae Udny an helpit his aal faither hyowin the neeps. They'd been at the hyowin aa the day fin he'd collapsed in the park. The doctor wiz called an said he'd teen the sunstroke.

Henny wiz nivver the same aifter that day and ended traippsin the country roon mair or less haaf aware an the tither haaf wi nae a clue o the warld aroon him. But a fine man wiz he neentheless ayee welcome tae the hearthsteen o mony a crafty, fairmtoon an bothy. Weel on in years Henny found it getting harder tae wun on cairryin his goods an chattles upon his back as he'd deen in the past. His salvation wid come in the shape o Henderson the baker in New Deer faa gave tae him an aal baker's barra.

It hid three widden spoked wheels wi iron rims. Twa big yins

and a wee een at the back used for steerin it. The box that made up the body o the cairt hid a huge drawer that pulled oot so the gyan aboot baker could pull oot an show aff his goods tae the customers. Noo this suited Henny doon tae a tee, an wi some help fae the vricht at Slacktackit he made the drawer big eneuch tae fit himsel liein inside. In effect the cairt wiz like a big coffin wi a drawer. The reef wiz convex in shape tae allow the water tae rin aff and wiz covered in waterproof tarry paper.

Noo Henny wiz fair trickit wi this cairtie. It wiz fine an licht for him tae push the country roon providin he keepit tae the laicher grun. The wee wheel at the back could be steered richt easy by turnin the hannlebars like that o a pushbike and that made for easy steerin.

Durin the day the big drawer held aa the tools o his trade an mair forbyes whiles at nicht he'd pit them ontae a wee rack he'd fashioned fae some reens an happit them wi a lump o canvas tae keep them dry. Henny wid pull oot the big drawer, climm inside an slide himsel intae the main cairt by pullin on twa haanles in the intimmers. This wye Henny wiz oot o the weather an fine an cosy tae boot.

Michty but Henny wiz the main man aboot the Buchan wi his cairtie. Fowk wid wait tae hear the clatter o the iron rimmed wheelies gyan by an rin oot wi knives or sic like for him tae sharpen.

Mony's the keckle an torment he'd get fae the country or fisher deemies. Some o the quines wid tease him aboot getting a wife for tae keep himsel warm in the lang winter nichts.

But Henny ayee came back wi, "Na na quinie fit wid I dee wi aa the bairns fin they came alang?"

This ayee got peals o laachter fae the deemies. A character wiz

Henny, an fowk aboot here were affa gweed tae him so he nivver wanted for a hamemade scone or a bit kyboch o fine cheesed.

Mair than nae if he wiz roon by at dennertime or supper he'd get a bowlie o fitivver wiz gyan at the hearthsteen wi the faimily.

Naebody wid cause hairm tae Henny for fowk said that he'd been given the straick o the ruchtum waan by the 'Gweed Fowk' faa hid seen fit tae tak the sense fae him in the days o his youth. They'd left him though wi the gift o makkin laachter an bringin gweed fortune tae the likes o them that showed him kindness. Some ither said he'd been struck wi the faerie dart while hyowin the neeps, yet ither argued that bein struck by the faerie dart wiz always fatal but a straik o the ruchtum waan left a body in this world but nae o it.

Fitivver the cause, peer Henny caad awa deein as best he could. A fyowe years alang the line Henny wiz campit intae an aal quarry aboot the Crichie wye. He'd jist feenished his supper o a corter o breid an a lump o kyboch he'd gotten fae a cottar deemie earlier on and richt fine it wiz ana. Pitten oot his wee fire wi the dregs o his tay he wint intae his cairtie for the nicht.

Even though it wiz the month o Mey there wiz still a caal bite tae the air but Henny inside his big drawer wiz weel oot o the chill nicht air. Wi a couple o cwites an his plydie wuppit aboot him he wiz as warm as a pie.

That very nicht three fairm chielis were makkin their wye hame aifter bein on the randan doon at Mintlaw. Fyachin hame the wye staggerin aboot wi the amount o ardent spirits teen they were lookin for highjinks and fin they come across the wee quarry faar Henny wiz in, they decided tae hae reels at his expense. They creepit inaboot an

jammed the drawer shut afore rinnin awa laachin like a puckle geets. It wiz aboot twar three days aifterhins that a millert loon waakin past heard a feeble shoutin an thumpin comin fae the quarry. He saw the cairtie and in nae time hid Henny oot o't.

The peer aal man wiz in an affa stae sayin his drawer hid stuckin for some reason? He jist couldna wun oot ava. The millert loon keepit weel clear though near boakin wi the smell o shite an stoore that waffted an dreepit aff o peer aal Henny Harper. Ae me sic a sotter!

Bob the Dog fae the Bog.

J eemicky Brochan wint inabout tae the skweelhouse at Bogsoakin an speired o the woman there if she kent far about the crafty o the Bogs wiz. She wiz busy scrubbin the big granite steps in front o the skweelhouse. She stoppit fit she wiz deein an pynted doon a lang sanny track tae the left, sayin he'd fin the placie he wiz seekin about haaf o a mile doon it. Jeemicky thankit her an set sail alang the track.

The man he wiz gyan tae see wiz a Pipe Major Macinnon faa sorted amongst bagpipes. Jeemicky cairried the pipes that he'd played at the takin o Beaumont-Hamel in the Great War. A crack hid appeared at the shank o the big drone so that wiz fit he wiz seekin the aal Pipe Major tae hae a look at.

Jeemicky wiz a richt grand player an wiz tae play at the Turra show in a month's time so he thocht he'd get the crack seen till in case it traiveled up the drone.

Naebody wiz gyan aboot so he thocht tae himsel he micht as weel tak the chance tae gyang throwe some o the sets he'd be playin at Turra Show. The lang sanny track wiz jist perfect for his playin marches. He blawed up the pipes and in nae time he'd his fingers dancin on the chanter. Michty but his fammils were swaak and wi a swing tae his step he wiz back eence mair at the takin o Beaumont Hammel and marchin towards glory.

By the time he'd wun his wye tae the aal Pipe Major's craft he wiz in gweed fettle. Instead o stoppin playin he wint intae the late

great Pipe Major R. Davidson's pibroch 'The Slug That Begged Saat,' arguably een o the maist complicated pibrochs ivver composed fae the mind o man.

Aifter a couple o measures o this the front door opened an the aal Pipe Major stood there fair beamin. A fyowe seconds later though a black shape came fae atween his legs, as a collie wi aa teeth an ersehole made a darry for Jeemicky.

The Pipe Major roared, "Come here Bob!!"

But na na, he'd nae be deein that. So instead o shoutin tae Bob the dog he roared at Jeemicky tae save himsel for the dog wiz mad an he could dee nithing wi it!

Jeemicky's yaks bulged fae his heed at the sicht o the moich jookle comin towards him wi its yell teeth an slaivers fleein fae its mooth.

A low groan started deep in Jeemicky's thrapple, risin tae a full blown scream at this fleein, growlin set o fangs an ersehole came for him. He'd presence o mind though tae unship the pipes fae his shooder and hud it like a living octopus tae his fore atween him an Bob the dog. Bob couldna wun by, so he wint for the pipes instead.

Aa the while Jeemicky screamin oot o him, "Avast there, avast!"

But Bob the dog widna avast an wiz in the weers o getting throwe Jeemicky's defenses tae gyan for his legs. Completely terrifeart an screamin oot o him like a wee quinie, Jeemicky in pure desperation swung a kick at Bob's heed an connected wi a crunch. Bob the dog gid but one howl an fell doon stone, stiff, starin deed!

The aal Pipe Major hid reached them by this time an found

Jeemicky shakin wi fear an sookin air in fae ivvery orifice in his body as he tried tae recover lost oxygen an compose himsel a bittie. His pipies lay scattered aboot like a bag o kennlers for the fire aroon the body o Bob the dog, faa's yakies noo were starin intae last Sunday or the yin afore. Recoverin a bit Jeemicky managed tae gasp oot an apology for killin Bob the dog.

But the aal Pipe Major wiz mair concerned aboot Jeemicky sayin, "Dinna worry ower the heeds o that dog min! It wiz a richt bad bastard that naebody could dee nithing wi!"

In the hinnereyne he managed tae get some kind o sense oot o Jeemicky, faa managed tae tell him the reason he'd come tae see him in the first place. The Pipe Major tellt him he'd be nottin mair than a cracked drone fixed noo as he looked doon at the butchered pipes and shakin his heed. He tellt Jeemicky tae come back this day next wik tae collect his repaired pipes. So sayin, he wint for a shovel and dragged Bob the dog awa by the tail tae beery him.

Jeemicky, still a gye bittie in shock and his leggies shakin wi the fear, tottered his wye back up the track wi his ersehole still winkin wi the terror o't aa. Gaspin a bit, an aifter gyan aboot haafwyes up the track, he happened tae look back the wye and saw in the distance a cloud o dust comin up the track towards him. It wiz then he noticed at the front o the dust cloud something black. His herty near stoppit in his breest, for it wiz Bob the dog back in the land o the livin. It must've jist been stunned.

Wi a low groan Jeemicky teen tae his heels. A sobbin an greetin sound came fae him as he bolted. He couldna scream for he'd nae ween for that, his body noott aa the oxygen it could get tae garr his

leggies move so a pitiful whimper wid hiv tae dee. He lookit ower his shooder and could see Bob the dog wiz gaining ontae him. So pittin even mair effort intae movin, the pitiful whimper turned intae a low scream, then got even louder as he could hear Bobs feet comin closer and closer.

Jeemicky jist made the gate o the skweelhouse an saw the woman he'd spoken till earlier wiz inside the vestibule scrubbin noo. She lookit up as she heard the continuous scream and saw a man wi a look o absolute terror on his face, wi his een stickin oot o his heed like hundog's pyokes and foam fleein fae his mooth and fae the foamy hole a merciful scream athoot end!

Wi a, "Mercy be here!" she cooriet doon jist as Jeemicky reached the tap step an trippit.

He slid towards her pittin the pale o water in the air and crashing intae her. Sabbin in terror, Jeemicky lifted his fit an pushed tee the door jist as Bob the dog reached it an hit him clean in the pan. Bob howled oot o him then started tae worry the door tryin tae ate its wye throwe tae get at Jeemicky, faa lay at the back o the door rollin aboot in pure terror shoutin oot o him;

"Oh me oh me the jookle's gan tae haa ma banes!"

In the event it teen the vricht, smiddy, gamie and the aal Pipe Major tae get Bob rowed up in a bit o net afore Jeemicky could get oot. Shakin like a leaf, he lookit doon at Bob the dog as it lay wupped up a prisoner. An argument hid set up among the fowk githered aboot as tae how they could dispatch Bob. The smith said he'd pit its heed ontae the anvil and mash it wi a haimmer.

"Whit?" shouted the gammie, "I'll gyang for the twalbore and

gie the coarse bugger baith barrels min!” And added, “It wid be far quicker than a bliddy haimmer!”

The vricht waded intae the argument wi, “I’ll gie the bugger a lash on the back o the heed wi a fower by three lump o timmer it winna ken fit hut it and there’d nae be ony sotter o bleed like fit you twa intend!”

The argument got even mair heated fin the peeler came inaboot quoting this law an that law regardin mad dogs. His intention wiz tae get the pistol fae the station that wiz keepit for sic an emergency.

Aa the while Jeemicky wiz lookin doon at Bob. Throwe the net he could see the big broon een lookin up at him as if beggin help. Leavin the increasingly angry fowk aleen he sat himsel on the grun aside Bob an put his haan oot an clappit the peer terrifeart beastie. Jeemicky expectin aa the while that Bob wid try an sink his teeth intae his fammil. But na he jist whimpered, so Jeemicky unrowed the net fae him and Bob crawled ower tae his bosie and put his heed allo Jeemicky’s jaicket as if tryin tae hide awa fae aa this fowk that wanted tae kill him.

It wiz the aal Pipe Major that spotted this first an exclaimed;
“Michty wid ye look at that!”

Aa heeds turned, their argument forgotten.

* * *

At Turra Show Jeemicky stood in the middle o the ring surrounded by haaf the world, well leastwyes haaf o Turra. His repaired pipes were ringin like a bell as he played his hert oot. He wiz gan tae feenish wi Pipe Major R. Davidson’s pibroch ‘The Slug that begged saat,’ but

decided instead tae feenish wi ‘The Fifty first Highland Division’s
‘Takkin o Beaumont-Hammel’

Many o the men githered aroon hid been wi Jeemicky on that day at the Somme an alloed the tears tae doonfaa unheeded.

Ithers throwe their tears were shoutin,“The man his fingers like angels wings!”

At the end he oxtered his pipes in salute as the fowk broke intae a mighty cheer. Baskin a wee bit in his glory, Jeemicky felt a saft nuzzle at his left leg and lookit doon intae the meltin broon een o Bob the Dog fae the Bog, his constant companion since that very first bosie at the skweelhouse at Bogsoakin!

The Herry Henny.

The bonny maiden sat solomentin under the shade o a rowan tree at the edge o the burn. The saat tears were rinnin unheeded doon her rosy cheeks as she wiz lost tae sorrow.

Ablow the bonny rowan tree wiz faar her only joy could be felt. A wee fish looked up at the lassie fae the crystal water an sic a wave o sadness came ower its countenance that wid mak a body think it wiz a human an nae a fish.

Slowly it swam up the burn and roon the bend till it wiz hidden fae the view o the lassie by a clump o whin bushes. As soon as it reached the spot it gave its tail a flap and loupit clear oot o the water and landed ontae its side on the grassy bank. The fish lay pechin for a meenit or twa afore it slowly teen on the form o an aal woman, faar there wiz scales noo wiz hamespun cloot intae the shape o a goon o green and an aapron o shimmerin reed. On her heid a wee frilly mutch an intae her haan a saachen woven basket o the maist intricate weave a body wid ivver set ee upon.

She made her wye alang the burn's bank tae faar the bonny maiden sat ablow the rowan tree deep in solomentin.

“Why weep ye so my bonny lassie whit ails ye?” said she in a soft highland lilt.

The lassie started and wiped the saat tears fae her bonny blue een as if ashamed tae be caught greetin by the aal woman.

Shakin her heid the lassie replied, “Nithing you or ony ither person upon the face o these lands o the bonny Buchan can help me

wi!"

The aal woman smiled and reached oot and stroked the maiden's golden hair.

"Dinna frett bonny lassie but maybe there is somebody in these bonny lands o the Buchan that can gie tae ye the help ye seek, so nae mair aboot it but tae tell ma fit makks ye so sad?"

The tale the maiden tellt the aal woman wid've broke the heart o the strongest warrior, nivver mind the peer lassie that tellt it. She wiz mairried tae the Laird o these lands faa loed her sae dear and wid dee onything for her. He'd fecht his wye throw tempest, flood and fire for her. He'd face the whole English army his leef aleen wi nithin but his trusty brand wielded sae strong an free. Thus wiz his love for this bonny lassie wi her cheeks sae wan an pale. But she couldnae fulfill sic devotion by giein him a son and heir.

She'd wint tae the 'Widdie Wife' tae get potions for tae help her bring forth a bairn but it hid nearly killed her. Next she'd wint tae the sooth and there set ee upon the prophet o Bethelnie; a doctor he wiz said tae be and knew aa the secrets o Elfland. He also gave her potions tae tak, as weel an certain secret words tae speak and motions tae gang throw in the eerie licht afore the brakkin o day.

She'd faithfully follid his directions and again nearly deet in the ongyans o them till the Laird himsel intervened and banned her tae the fear o bainishment fae ivver gan tae ony witchie fowk for help wi begettin him a son and heir. So now she sits solomentin the hopelessness o her life.

The aal woman aifter listenin and dichtin the saat tear fea her ee untae her did say, "Weel lassie I think that might be I can gie ye

some help in the fulfillment o yer wish but ye'll hae tae caa in the very wye I tell ye tae or else it'll fail aathegither!"

She smiled at the lassie an says, "Wait ye here for the gloamin o dusk for my return!"

So sayin she made her wye back up the burn tae the bend aside the whin bushes and laid hersel doon ontae the bank. Slowly she eence mair teen on the form o a fish and wi' ae slap o her tail loupit back intae the clear water. The fish lookit up tae the heich waas o the castle tae see that nae man wiz witness tae her change. But nae shout nor onything else came fae the grey heich waas, for as this wiz a time o peace nae sae muckle o a lookoot wiz keepit.

The fish wint doon the burn slowly past the bonny lassie sittin under the rowan tree and wiz kinichted tae see that the look o hopelessness hid left her face though her een were still gye reed wi aa the greetin.

A flick o her tail and she set aff doon the water. Soon she reached the place faar the fresh water met the saat water and she shivered a wee bit, for it wiz caal compared wi the burn and the saat nipped her skin until she got eesed tae it.

She swam for mony a lang Scotch mile and wiz almost teen wi a massive Heron that swooped doon upon her like a fleein arra. She jinked jist in time and the bugger wint intae the water and came up wi an teem beak. She gave it a scud wi her tail and knocked it skitin an screachin intae the air. Aifter that though, she wint much deeper tae keep oot o the range o ony ither buggerin bird that socht tae ate her for its denner.

So on an on she swam till she thocht she'd dee o tiredness

aathegither. But on she wint, on and on till she reached a point in the middle o the Frith o Moray. There she stoppit tae get her strength back, then wi a big gulp o water she wint deep, deeper than she'd ivver been afore. Doon an doon she wint, till she thocht her intimmers were gan tae burst oot fae her.

The deeper she got the licht began tae ween awa, till she swam throwe complete darkness but on she keepit gyan. Her tail wiz grabbed by some beast o the deep and she'd tae thrash her wye free. She felt the pain lance up throwe her body but on she wint. She knew if she stopped that wid be the feenish o her aathegither. Oot o the blackness she could feel ither beasts makkin breeenges at her but she jinked clear ayee gan deeper an deeper till sic time she could mak oot a sliver o licht ontae her left so she headed towards it. Slowly the licht got bigger till she could see fit she'd came sae far tae find. The gairden o Badenscoth the place far the elves o elfland leave the cures tae aa the ills o mankind.

Quickly she grabbed intae her mooth a bunch o 'Birth Girss', then as she headed awa she spotted the white steen o the Fairey Queen and she managed tae get a puckle intae her mooth. She hid tae be gye quick, for the elves o the deep sea dinna like interlopers within their kingdom. But she needna hiv been afeart, for that day neen attended the gairden.

So aff she teen, sweemin towards the surface wi aa the power she'd left in her body. Eventually she reached the spot faar her burn met the sea and glaidly did she drink o its clear water till she washed aa the horrible saat fae her body. She could see faar the beast hid torn at her tail. She flapped it in the fresh water tae see if that wid pit the

pain awa but it didnae seem tae work ava.

Slowly she made her wye back up the water tae faar the bonny lassie still sat awytin her as she askit her tae dee. Much slower this time, she turned the corner so she wiz oot o sicht and wi a gye chavez she loupit up ontae the bank.

She lay there pechin for a fyowe minties until the change eence mair came ower her. Gettin slowly tae her feet she stammered her wye tae the bonny lassie. The lassie's een were still reed wi the greetin, so she sat doon at her side and teen her haan in hers.

"Dinna frett noo bonny lassie for I am here tae gie ye the gift o a son and heir!"

The bonny lassie stoppit her greetin and smiled wi the licht o hope intae her een.

Fae the basket the aal woman teen the bunch o 'Birth Girss', she'd teen fae the elves o the deep tellin her, "Tak you this and get yer cook tae bile it wi water teen fae the Holy waal o St Drostan at Aiberdour. Mind though the water should nivver touch the grun eence atween here and there. Thereaifter bile the 'Birth Girss' for three days and three nichts and tak you a bowlfae in the first mornin aifter."

The bonny lassie nodded her understanding as the aal woman continued.

"Noo tell yer cook that nae livin person can sup o the bree o that she maun be clear on and that athing left in the pot should be beeriet deep!"

The bonny lassie smiled.

"I'll dee as ye bid aal woman."

Fae the basket the aal woman teen twa o the three white

pebbles an says, “Get these set intae gowd rings so that the ‘Tellin Steens’ can be worn by you and yer son. The ‘Tellin Steens’ will turn as reed as my aapron if ivver yer son tae be is in mortal danger!”

The bonny lassie gave the aal woman a bosie and thankit her for the gift o an heir. It wiz then she noticed the aal woman’s feet were poorin o bleed.

“Oh me!” says she, “Yer feet are in an affa mess!”

So sayin she takks fae her shooder the finest silk shawl in aa the braid Buchan and wupps the aal woman’s feet offerin tae tak her within the castle waa’s and get the physician tae look at them. The aal woman fair touched by her concern tellt her that the silk so freely given wid cure her wounds.

Nine months aifter the bonny lassie, or lady Anne as she wiz, gave birth tae a wee laddie so gein her man the Laird the son and heir he so wantit.

A feast wiz called for and the cooks spent days preparing aa the fancy food for the table. Every cook that wiz except Lady Anne’s cook, faa hersel hid given birth tae a wee laddie. At the same time as this wiz gyan on the Laird’s horse hid given birth tae twa foals as weel as his hound and hawk that hid also brocht forth twins. The feast wint doon in the folk lore o the bonny Buchan and still tae this very day is spoken o.

As the years wint by the Laird’s son an heir grew tae manhood strong and true as the North win and so did the cook’s son. They looked for aa the world like twins. The only difference wiz that the Laird’s son wiz golden haired an blue eyed, faar the cook’s son wiz dark haired an broon eyed. They were the very best o pals and

faar ye found one, ye found the ither.

The likeness became so noticeable that one day Lady Anne went doon tae speak tae her cook. It transpired that the cook hid teen a sip o the bree tae check if it needed saat and that instead o beerrien the remains in the pot she'd throwed it ontae the girss o the lichtin green. The Laird's hawk hid picked at the 'Birth Girss', so hid the horse and hound and each given birth tae twins. Lady Anne couldna be angry wi her cook, for each hid a bonny laddie and they were worth their wecht in gowd.

The time came though fin Lady Anne's son Hamish hid tae leave the bonny Buchan and cross the Grampians tae Moidart. There he wid learn the art o war fae a group o warrior monks that came fae the Holy Land. Lady Anne tried tae stop the Laird fae sendin their bonny laddie tae sic a place but the Laird insisted; jist as he'd insisted many years afore that their son's first solid food should be fed tae him on the point o a sword tae ensure that he wid die in battle and nae in a fine feather bed. Lady Anne kent fine it wiz traditional in the Buchan but that didna mak it ony easier tae think aboot.

Onywye the day came fin Hamish made tae leave but a ruckus set up in the kitchen and the cook's son Daniel came oot the door wi his goods an chattles wuppit up in a bit o hamespun an his mither comin ahin implorin him nae tae leave.

Daniel wint up tae the Laird and offered his services tae be his son's servant. The Laird, always teen aback by how much Daniel lookit like Hamish and kenin fine they were the very best o pals, granted him leave tae gyang ana.

Twa years wid pass afore they returned. Baith hid grown

strong and toughened by their years awa in the clean airs o Moidart. Hamish now a knight wore the burnished suit o armour wi the St Drostan's cross emblazoned ontae the breest plate, while Daniel walked at his side weerin a smock wi the same cross ontae it.

The Laird ordered up a feast tae celebrate the return o the twa men for that's fit they were now. Men! Fit naebody kent though wiz that in the twa years they'd been awa ivverything Hamish learned fae the warrior monks he'd taught Daniel at the day's end. Baith boys hid lang kent they were brithers and fit better o a gift can one brither gee tae the ither than share the knowledge that might yet save their lives.

Daniel wint back tae helpin his mither in the Laird's kitchen, while Hamish wiz sent awa deein great deeds aroon the country mounted ontae his war horse followed by his hawk and hound.

Months wint by and nae word o Hamish wiz heard. Noo years afore fin Daniel wiz doon playin by the rowan tree aside the burn, an aal woman appeared dressed in a goon o green wi a reed aapron an a mutch ontae her heed. She teen fae a wee basket a white pebble and tellt him tae ayee ween it aboot his neck. She caad it 'A Tellin Steen' and says that if ivver it changes tae bricht reed then his brither wiz in life threatening danger. Daniel always checked it and sometimes he'd seen it turn pink which meant mild danger but he'd nivver seen it bricht reed.

Aboot this time Lady Anne wiz getting haunted by a strange apperition. Ae nicht she wiz in her bed chamber shewin a scarf for Hamish. On it she'd put the cross o St Drostan and wiz gyan tae get it blessed by the priest doon at St Drostan's waal eence she'd finished it. She wiz affa worried aboot her laddie and hid tried tae get Daniel

tae gang wi him but the Laird hid said Hamish maun learn tae look aifter his ain warhorse and hawk and hound. That's fin she heard the strange scrapin sound at her chamber windae.

Noo her chamber wiz at the cliff side o the castle and at least twa hunnder feet abeen the beach ablow. Quickly she laid doon her shewin an drew the drapes. Shis wiz jist in time tae see fit lookit like a hen's claw scrappin at the windae then a black shada as fitivver it wiz flew awa. Nicht aifter nicht this wid happen but each time aa she saw wiz the shada fleein awa.

Lady Anne wiz weel aweer o the legend o the 'Herry Henny' and it wiz said she wid come tae yer windae and scrape it wi her hen's fit. She checked her 'Tellin Steen' she wore in her ring but thankfully it remained white. Hamish wore the marras ontæ his ain finger.

Onywye at this time Hamish wiz at the far side o the country searching for ony evil ongyans that he could pit tae richt, fin he came across this massive forest. Gyan throwe it his hawk wid flee abeen the trees tae find the path, while his hound wid gyang on aheed sniffin oot ony danger. Aifter a couple o days o this, his hawk and dog were fair exhausted so he teen them ontæ his warhorse tae gie them a bit o a hurl. They baith fell asleep intae his bosie so he let them sleep awa.

Aboot a haaf o a league faarer on he came tae a clearing in the forest and there beheld the bonniest wee cottage he'd ivver put ee upon in his life. It hid a thacket reef and wiz painted white as the driven snaa and twa green pintit windaes and door. Whit a bonny wee placie, he said tae himsel.

There wiz really well made statues in the gairden. Some were weemin an bairns; ithers goats,sheep,dogs,hawks and even a couple o mounted knights ontae their warhorses. As he drew closer he could see how good the sculptures really were. If they werena made o steen ye wid sweer they were livin.

Onywyne Hamish dismounted and this wakened up his hawk and hound and they sleepily lookit aboot. He shussed them and laid them ontae a wee puckle sraa by the gate, leavin them tae gyang back tae sleep. He made for the door, wi the hope o getting a bite for himsel and his warhorse, hawk and hound.

He chappit ontae the door and a voice fae within tellt him tae come awa in. Hamish bein so tall hid tae boo his heed tae wun throwe the door. An aal woman sat on a big chair by the side o a lowin fire. She'd a wizened wee facie and spoke wi a scraichin voice.

“Fit can I dee for ye laddie?” speired she.

Hamish tellt her fit he wiz seekin and tellt her he'd pey her weel if she could furnish his needs.

“Och aye laddie I can fairly help ye!”

Hamish wiz so busy lookin aboot the room he nivver noticed her pull a hair fae her erse and throw it doon the side o the seat. The hair turned inae a coil o rope.

Leanin ower she picked it fae the fleer and says tae Hamish, “Here, tak you this rope that is strong enough tae hud the fleet at Troy and tie up yer warhorse, hawk, and hound!”

Hamish teen the rope and as he wint ootside the aal woman shouted; “An ye might leave yer shairp battle brand ootside for I'm terrifeart o shairp things.”

Hamish tied up his warhorse, hawk and hound and made his wye back tae the cottage, mindin tae leave his battle brand ootside tee tae the waa. As soon as he stepped intae the door it slammed ahin him and the aal woman turned intae the ‘Herry Henny’ and flew at him scraichin oot o her like a hen. Hamish tried sair tae stop her but wi nae battle brand tae haan he wiz in deep trouble. His warhorse, his hawk and his hound tried sair tae get lowsed fae their rope but even they couldna undee it for Hamish hid tied it ower weel.

Lady Anne wiz sittin pittin the finishin touches tae Hamish’s scarf fin the scratchin sound came fae the windae. This wiz the first time she’d heard it in daylight so she ran tae the windae and fit should she see but the ‘Herry Henny’ clawin at the windae.

It’s hen’s heedy turned aboot scraichin oot o’t, “I’ve got him I’ve got him scraiaiaiaach scraiaiaiaach!” Then it flew awa.

Lady Anne in a state o collapse lookit at her ring and saw it hid turned as bricht as a lowin coal.

“Oh me!” said she, “My bairn’s in mortal danger!” an ran fae her chamber.

The Laird wiz awa fae the place, so she made her wye doon tae the kitchen in search o Daniel. She met him haafwyes on the stair and she could see the horror ontae his face as he held his ain ‘Tellin Steen’ as reed as a lowin coal. Quickly she tellt him tae tak the twin warhorse, hawk and hound an search for her bairn.

Daniel did this and also teen the spare suit o armour that Hamish kept. So riggit he mounted the warhorse called for the hawk and hound an set oot tae find his brither that wiz in mortal danger. His mither and Lady Anne stood greetin an huddin eenanithers haan as

Daniel left the lichtin green.

Daniel rode as a knight and the warhorse, hawk and hound obeyed his ivvery command. He might nae be a knight in the een o the gentry but he kent athing that his brither hid shown him.

It teen Daniel weeks tae track faar aboot Hamish hid been; an finivver he speired at fowk if they'd seen a mounted knight ontae a warhorse an wi a hawk and hound, they'd smile and say they hid and pynt him in the richt direction. Hamish wiz their hero, for he'd put tae richt a lot o wrangs in the country roon.

Eventually Daniel came tae the very same forest his brither entered. The hawk wint heich lookin for the track and the hound wint sniffin aboot for danger. Daniel though wiz a better tracker than Hamish and keepit his hawk and hound fae getting ower tired. By the time Daniel reached the clearin and saw the hoose, his hawk and hound were still alert. The dog growled an pulled back its teeth and the hawk wint heich whistlin its danger cry.

Daniel dismounted and approached the door. He saw aa the bony statues and wiz fair teen aback as tae foo real they lookit and them made o steen. Een though he swore he recognised. It lookit like Hamish mounted ontae his war horse. The hawk stood there, wi its wings spread and the hound wi its teeth bared as if frozen.

Daniel gave a chap at the door but he wiz on full alert noo. A scraichin voice fae inside bade him come awa in. Daniel entered booin his heed doon tae wun throwe the door. He saw an aal wizened wifie sittin ontae a big seat by the fire. He tellt her he wiz seekin food and water for his warhorse, hawk and hound and that he'd pey her weel for them.

Daniel made on he wiz lookin aroon the room but by the tail o his ee he saw the aal wifie pull a hair fae her erse and drap it doon the side o the chair. His hert near missed a beat fin he saw it turn intae a coil o rope. Nae lettin on, he said tae her that she'd an affa bonny hoosie.

She leaned doon tae the side o the seat an says, "Here tak ye this laddie!" and threw the rope tae him.

"Ye micht tie up yer warhorse, hawk and hound wi this rope strong enough tae hud the fleet at Troy!"

And as Daniel wint oot the door she scraiched ahin him that he micht leave his battle brand at the door for she wiz terrifeart o shairp things.

Daniel tied his warhorse, hawk and hound but nae ticht as hud them back. As he wiz deein this he could hear a scraichin sound comin fae the cottage winda so he turned quickly jist in time tae see a shada move oot o sicht.

As he returned tae the cottage he left his battle brand at the yett o the door within easy reach. As soon as he entered the cottage the door slamed shut ahin him as the aal wifie turned intae the 'Herry Henny.' She flew at him wi her henny claws as shairp as razors. He focht back as best he could but he kent if he didna get his brand he wiz finished.

The horse reared up ootside and the half tied rope fell awa and the warhorse charged the door o the cottage and bowffed it intae a thoosand bits. The hawk and hound follid through and wint for the Herry Henny. Daniel got his haan ontae his battle brand and put the finish tae the combat by one mighty swing.

The ‘Herry Henny’ wiz gone and the aal wifie fell tae her knees saying, “Thank ye thank ye laddie for I’ve been held under the evil spell o the Herry Henny for many many a year!”

Daniel bent doon, an teen her till her feet an says, “Yer free noo aal woman, yer free!”

That’s fin he heard the shouts o joy and the barkin o dogs and ither sounds comin fae the gairden. Fin he lookit oot aa the statues were alive again set free wi his battle brand. Hamish stood there smilin and teen his brither intae his bosey thankin him for savin him sayin.

“Ye’ve earned yer knighthood brither my father will see tae that!”

Tales from Dr Festing Makadoork's Case Book:
Mrs Clushet o Faaldydykes.

Doctor Makadoork sat back fae his desk and teen aff his glaisses and pressed the brig o his nose atween forefinger and thoom for a minty.

It hid been a gye busy morning, wi as muckle fowk comin doon wi the winter fever and aa seekin a cure for't. He shook his heed, nae wi annoyance but wi fatigue and the hope he himsel wisna comin doon w't ana. Nae maitter he'd nae the time tae be naeweel.

Pullin oot his pocket watch he saw that he'd a wee bitty time for a cuppy o tay an something tae ate afore he yokit the horse and gig for this day's rounds. Gettin up stiffly fae his desk he readied his doctor's bag wi some o the things he'd be nottin that day. Aboot tae leave, he mind tae turn oot the lamp. Yestreen he'd wint awa and left it burning, wasting paraffin wisna the worst o't. The thocht o coming back tae the hoose tae find it brunt tae the grun because he forgot tae pit it oot wiz far worse.

Snappin the bag shut he laid it on the cheer aside the door and wiz awa tae gyang throwe the hoose tae the scullery tae pit the kettle on. Opening the door o the surgery faa should he find sitting there on the aal pew o the waiting room but Mrs Clushet fae Faaldydykes.

He almost moaned oot loud but rallied himsel tae be pleasant wi a, "Oh I didna ken there wiz onybody waiting tae see ma."

Noo Mrs Clushet o Faaldydykes wiz ivvery doctor's nightmare. Een o yon patients that awaken each mornin and winder

‘Fit’s wrang wi ‘me’ the day?’ an quickly come rinnin if a fart in their erves gings wrang. In ither words a hypochondriac! Weel past middle age, Mrs Clushet o Faaldydykes wiz nivvertheless as fit as a flea but always seemed tae be worried aboot different illnesses. Usually Doctor Makadoork tried his best tae reassure her athing wiz aaricht, and at a haafcroon for ilka consultation she wiz a good patient in that respect. Mair norr half his patients struggled tae pey the haafcroon; an mair aften than nae they’d pey him wi eggs, tatties or a hen or twa. Michty, he’d a herd an a haaf o the buggers rinnin aboot the place somewye an divil o an egg hid he yet managed tae find.

“Ye’d better wun throwe tae ma surgery Mrs Clushet,” says he.

Fair beamin, she held her wye in and sat doon on the cheer as Doctor Makadoork wheeched awa his doctor’s bag in time afore she sat her doup ontae it. Gyan roon the desk and sittin doon he speired at her fit ailed her the day.

“Well,” says she. “I’ve been noticing ower the last fyowe mornins that my een are affa weak fin I read the paper. Div ye hae ony idea fit could be wrang Doctor Makadoork?”

Doctor Makadoork, thoughtfully kind, said, “Well Mrs Clushet I’d better hae a wee look at yer een for starters.”

He’d tae licht his lamp first, for there wisna muckle daylight penetrated the room at this time o day. He hid a look at her een wi his lenses for the job.

“Can ye see how my een are so weak in the mornins doctor?” speired Mrs Clushet.

He stood back and rubbed his chin and athoot sayin onything,

he wint inabout tae his bookshelf o medical beuks an selected yin. Takin it back tae his desk nearer the lamp, he started tae flick throwe the pages and stoppin ivvery noo an then tae rin his finger doon the page as if lookin in mair detail. He started makkin tuttin sounds and slightly shakkin his heed.

Mrs Clushet moved forritt speirin, “Oh fit’s wrang doctor, oh me fit’s wrang?”

He looked up intae her pensive face, still makkin a tuttin sound and shakin his heed. Closin the beuk wi a snap that made Mrs Clushet jump and takkin aff his glaisses, he pinched the brig o his nose purely for effect and in a tone o doom said;

“Well Mrs Clushet I think I’ve found oot fit’s wrang wi yer een bein so weak in the morning.”

Mrs Clushet, near in a state o collapse, her hypochondriac’s mind started tae race.

In a reedy tone she managed tae ask, “Will I die o’t doctor?”

Tae pit her at her ease he shook his heed sayin, “Na na Mrs Clushet dam ee fear’s o’t ye winna be gyan tae the kirkyard yet quine.”

The look o relief that came ower her face wiz a pieter.

He continued wi, “The reason yer een are so weak in the mornin is quite straacht forritt and nae life threatening ava.”

He wyted a second or twa for even mair effect afore sayin, “The reason is this-Mrs Clushet o Faaldydykes- yer een are set in an affa weak place!”

Johnny's Blessing.

This is a strange story but I canna claim tae be its author as the man that wrote it lies at the aal kirkyard at Kineddart as he's deen for the last hunder an forty odd years. That man wiz my three times greatgranda the Reverend Gordon S. Gow. He wiz the minister here at Eden for forty eight years fae 1820 – 1868.

He wiz a prolific writer and kept amazingly detailed journals and I'm lucky enough tae own them. They are written in a close neat hand in the copperplate style o the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They by their very content were nivver meant tae be published. He records in great detail stories o ghosts, witches, Devil's imps and ither strange ongyans o the occult aboot the parish. For a man o the cloth he'd a great respect for folklore and nivver made a fool o local beliefs so obviously steeped in the pagan times. But noo in these mair enlightened times I think that some o his tales should be published, something he daurna hae deen in his ain time. I hiv published a few stories fae his journals already but nivver named him as their author. They are 'The Lichtin Green' 'The Steens That Turned' 'The Prechum Steen', 'The Meal Girnal' tae name but a fyowe. The ideas for many o my ither stories also come fae his journals so his influence is throughoot aa my ain writing.

Abit o a storm wiz startin tae come in aff the sea as Megan pit the shutters tee. There wiz only the three windaes in the cottage and for mair than eence she thankit the memory o her aal fadder faa'd biggit the hoosie kennin full weel that eence the winter weens came that ower muckle windaes wid be a gye weakness. The gavel eyne wiz only aboot thirty yards fae the beach, an mony's the time water hid washed aroon the biggin, but it wiz the gavel eyne that teen the brunt o the storms. Nae windae there, though!

She closed up her puckle chuckins intae there wee steen biggit coup wi its door facin awa fae the ween. A hannyfae o corn trysted them in and she shut and tied the door closed. Aifter she wiz pleased that aathing that could flee awa wiz tied doon, she shouted on Maizie her goat. A squall hid hut the shore noo an the rain got gye heavy. She shouted on Maizie eence mair but still nae signs o her ava. She wiz usually inabout tae the place this far intae the forenicht so Megan began tae worry something ill hid happened tae her.

Maizie ranged the cliffs durin the day, seekin the lushest girss, but she ayee came back weel afore nicht. Megan wint intill the hoose for the aal lump o canvas she used as a cwite and thus riggit she wint back intae the noo drivin rain tae search for Maizie.

Aifter a fair whilie raikin aboot Megan saw Maizie at the heed o the cliff road, standin still and lookin doon at something bleatin oot o her. Or the time Megan won her wye up tae the heed o the track, she could see it wiz a bairnie lyin still on the grun.

“Ae me God be here!” said she, and wint for the bairnie.

As she drew nearer she could see the wee fite facie as if a corp. There wiz hardly a stitch o clyse on the bairn jist a fyowe rags.

She felt the thrapple for signs o life an wiz fair relieved fin she felt a bit o a pulse.

She shooed Maizie awa, then wuppit the bairn up in the canvas cwite an heested her wye doon tae the hoose. Maizie trotted on ahin, bleatin oot o her for aa she wiz worth. Inside Megan put the bairn ontae the deese aside the big open fire, an rabbit the bairn's haans an feet tae get the bleed flowin. She'd tae push Mazie awa, for she wiz getting in the road an deein this jist made her bleat waarr for she'd been tryin tae help in her wye o't.

The bairn started tae come tee and even a wee bittie colour hid come intae the facie.

"Ae me ye poor bairn!"

Megan spoke softly speirin the bairn if there wiz ony pain. The bairn haaf nodded and rubbed its belly. Megan could weel see how emaciated the bairnie lookit.

Ower the past three years there'd been a big hunger sweepin the land an boorachs o strangers could fyles be seen makkin their wye tae the coast faar a body could ayee get a bite tae ait if ye kent faar aboot tae look. Ower the past three years the hairst hid aa but failed wi aa the weety weather. Hopefully the 1784 hairst widna fail, thocht Megan, or there'd be an affa lot mair fowk in the same state as this peer wee bairn.

She made up a gruel an fed the bairn wee suppies so's nae tae swaal in the teem belly.

Megan wiz the local 'herb doctor' or 'witchie wife' as she wiz mair kent as. Jist as her mither afore her she ministered tae the needs o the local fowk, for there wiz nae physician for mony's the mile and

onywye if there hid been een fowk could nivver afoord tae gyang tae een.

She washed the bairn wi wild garlic an vinegar an pit eyntment ontae the sores that covered haaf his body. He tellt her his name wiz Johnny and that he wiz aacht years aal but he kent nithing else. She wuppit him up in a fine saft woollen cloot and let him sleep aside the cosy fire. Aa the while her goat Maizie wiz makkin an affa fuss aroon the bairn as if she wanted tae tak him intae her bosie like she wid've deen wi a kid.

Megan rabbit her curly heedy sayin, “Na na Maizie we’re baith o us ower aal tae be mithers, we’re jist twa aal maids thegither!”

Neist mornin Johnny seemed an affa lot better but still didna mind onymair aboot himsel as he did the nicht afore. She made a potfae o porridge an got him tae ait weel o it.

Ower the next wikk or so, Johnny wiz up and aboot and his constant companion wiz Maizie; she’d nae let him oot o her sicht ava. Meanwhile Megan made him duck troosers and a pea-jaicket oot o green dyed canvas and a pair o sheen o double shewed canvas wi soles made o dried kelp. By another wikk Johnny and Maizie were explorin ivvery cove they could reach. Johnny’s sores hid cleared up fine wi them bein washed ilka day wi wild garlic an vinegar. His reed rimmed een wi the hunger hid cleared up ana wi aa the fine nourishin broths made wi the herbs that grew in abundance aboot the coves.

Megan smiled tae hersel as she watched the twa o them rinnin aboot. If ye found een ye found the ither. Maizie wiz treatin him as if he wiz her ain.

Megan’s mind wint back tae a time lang, lang syne fin the

young loons fae the toon wid come doon tae see her. Her aal mither wisna jist ower pleased though at aa the attention that wiz bein peyed tae her quine. The loons wid makk up an excuse for bein there and wid fyles say something wiz wrang wi them and wid spen a bawbee for some tonic. Mair than eence her aal mither wid gee them mair norr they bargained for and the tonic wid gyang throwe them like bilin lead. Megan laached at the memory.

“Peer loons!”

That wiz then and now’s her and Maizie jist twa aal maids thegither. But Johnny though hid brocht a lot o colour intae their lives, even as far as them getting broody. His smilin happy facie fairly lifted their spirits.

He still didna ken faa he wiz though, an fyles fin she pressed him she could see his wee facie gyan richt sad. Megan nivver pushed fin she saw this and wid quickly change the subject, speirin at him instead if he’s seen onything interestin alang the coves.

The months wun by and Johnny lookit richt healthy wi the wecht pilin ontae his merge frame. As this happened Megan thocht tae hersel that it wiz aboot time she teen him intae the toon tae get a richt tyler made rigoot, then tae the souter for a pair o leather beets. She’d hin tae re-sole the ither eens wi kelp a puckle times since he’d been rinnin aboot wi Maizie. But this wisna tae be, for that very forenicht Johnny come till her an tellt her he’d tae leave.

Megan wiz fair teen aback wi this, speirin faar aboot he wiz gan? Johnny lookit so sad fin he tellt her he didna ken faar he wiz gan but only that he’d ither work tae dee. Nae maitter foo muckle Megan priggit wi him, he jist tellt her he’d tae leave and continue his work.

Kennin fine she'd nae claim tae him, an nae maitter foo she longed for a bairn o her ain, he said he'd tae leave her and Maizie an that wiz that.

She riggit him as best she could an fulled his breedpyoke wi aa the tasty bits she could for his journey. Johnny lookin gye sad wint in tae her bosie and thankin Megan for aathing he whispered;

“Bless you Megan and bless yer hearth steen and a double blessing on you and Maizie.

Wi that he started up the cove track. Megan ran intae the hoose wi the tears trippin her and Maizie bleatin oot o her ran aifter Johnny nudgin him as she ayee did fin she wanted tae play. Johnny bent doon and gave her a bosie ana and tearfully tellt her tae wun hame tae Megan because she needed her this forenicht. But she jist steed there bleatin oot o her like a mither faa hid jist lost her kid.

Megan hearin this ran fae the hoose dichtin her een. She'd nae intention o lettin Johnny leave her but by the time she wun oot aa she could see wiz Maizie lookin up at the heed o the track bleatin oot o her. O Johnny she could see nae sign, he wiz gone fae them. She made tae rin up the track tae catch up wi Johnny but Maizie hid ither ideas an held fast tae the hem o her frock an widna let her go!

A forty years an mair aifter that forenicht o lang syne a man sat on the green girss lookin doon intae the self same cove. He shuddered, but nae wi lookin doon intae the cove. He shuddered wi the fever that hid nearly killed him onboard the ship he'd sailed hame fae Ceylon in. He cursed silently aneeth his breath thinkin that yet another bout o fever wid see him intae the kirkyard.

He'd been hame less than a wikk noo and the disaster he'd

walked in on wiz still gye soor tae swally. His father the Laird hid left the once big estate in ruins and creakin under huge debts. His father in a fyowe short years squandered the fortune his ain father hid built up. Drink, weemin and gamblin hid teen their toll o the fortune but worse his health hid broken ower the heeds o't aa. He'd died doon in Edinburgh in a drunken brawl ower the heeds o debts owed.

The man shuddered as yet another wave o fever rattled aboot his already weakened body. The man hid nivver gotten on wi his father, so many years ago he'd opted tae gyang oot tae rin the faimily tea plantation at Ceylon. Noo even that wiz gone; lost tae the turn o a card. He winnert fit his granda the aal Laird wid think aboot it aa if he were still here.

His granda wiz a completely different man fae his father. A hard workin man that of course made a lot o money but always made sure his workers got decently peyed and were itherwyces weel lookit aifter.

In Ceylon his plantation wiz een o the maist productive but that wiz gotten nae by near slavery like ither plantations but by his workers willin tae gee him their very best. His policy o a fair days pey for a fair days work and his re-investment back intae the plantations hid been a master stroke. His father, though, hid jist milkit the plantations bone dry and it wiz a sair day for the man fin he'd hin tae tak his leave o the fowk he'd come tae view as an extended faimily. And the man that wiz the under manager Mr Sarkar, faa hid been a tower o strength tae him fin his wife hid died. That day, because o his father's stupidity, he'd tae leave Mr Sarkar and aa his freens under the yoke o een o the worst owners in Ceylon. The man

shook his heed in frustration and despair at that thocht and muttered

“Lost at the turn o a bliddy card!”

He vowed there and then that if he wiz spared he'd get the plantation back fae oot o the haans o that cruel man. He shuddered again and that teen his thochts back tae the present.

Megan's hoosie wiz in ruins noo, the thackit reef lang awa aifter so many years o winter weens an storms. The riggin wiz still visible, an stuck oot like the rib cage o a lang deed beast. He cannily made his wye doon tae the ruins for he wiz still as wake as a kitten. Oot o breath an shiverin, he reached the hoosie or leastwyes the wee drysteen dyke in front o't. Weakly he sat himsel doon ontae it and viewed the hoosie allowin lang forgotten memories tae wash ower him.

As a bairn he'd fyles come doon here wi his granda the aal Laird. Ilka year he'd come up fae Edinburgh tae get his yearly batch o ‘tonic’ that Megan made up for him. Ivvery year he'd teen doon sax one gallon flagons back sooth wi him and this lasted till his next visit. Ilka flagon wiz fulled wi a green liquid and his granda swore by it, sayin it keepit his bleed an lungs clear o the reek fae the city. There must've fairly been something in that for he'd deet at ninety.

A mighty shudder passed throwe the man and he muttered; “I dinna think this Laird will be seein that age,” as his beens rattled wi the approachin deadly fever.

He'd eence seen his granda gee Megan a haanfae o gowd coins for her tonic so it must've been gweed. He could dee wi a drappy o that himsel richt this meenit.

It wisna till the man wiz aaler that his granda hid tellt him a

bittie aboot Megan.

Her mither wiz the local ‘witchiewife’ and her man wiz a vricht tae the trade faa fyles did vrocht for the laird. It wiz while workin at the big hoose he’d fell an brook his back bane. The aal Laird hid been affa come at aboot this and hid sent for the finest surgeon in Aiberdeen tae see tae him. But in the event the vricht deet afore he got there.

Tae try and help the aal Laird hid given Megan’s mither the hoosie and the land for as lang as she lived. Megan at the time o her faither’s death wiz but a wee bairnie but the aal Laird made sure she nivver wanted. Megan learned aa aboot the herbs an the Blaik Airts fae her aal mither. But faarrings her mither couldna read an write, Megan could an this wiz at the insistence o the aal Laird faa’d peyed for her lessons at the pairish skweel.

Ae year at een o his visits he’d men wi him in a cairt loaded wi a big unit fulled o wee drawers for Megan’s herbs. Aa the wye fae Edinburgh it hid come teen oot o een o the aal Laird’s teahouses. The man smiled fin he mind aboot that and the look ontae her face as it hid been fittid. He also laached at the memory o Maizie the goat bein fair vrocht up at aa the ongyans and nudgin him as if she wanted tae play.

The man, shiverin badly noo, wint inaboot tae the waal faar bonny clear water wiz gurglin tae the surface fae deep allo the grun. He slowly wint tae his knees bein as careful as he could for his heed wiz fair spinnin. He cuppit his haans an drank o the bonny clear water. It hid an ironerie zing tae it but tasted gweed neen the less. Aifter he’d slaikit o his drowth weel he got up an waakit inaboot tae

the ruins.

He wiz surprised tae see the unit fae his granda still in place though it wiz in a gye peer state aifter aa the years o weather. In fact athing lookit much the same as he remembered it. He pulled oot een o the drawers, an it fell tae bits scatterin ontae the grun some withered herbs fae the time o Megan.

The man smiled tae himsel as he mind how fowk eesed tae say that Megan wiz in league wi the Divel, an that Maizie the goat wiz actually Aal Leather Tail himsel in the shape o a goat. They said ye could see the imprint o cloven hooves aa ower the sanny bits o the cove.

If fowk hid thocht that back then nae muckle winder the hoosie hid been left tae wrack an ruin. He shuddered eence mair, deep inside his very soul, as the fever raged throwe him. Leastwyes here in the ruins he wiz oot o the breeze.

Wi the reef bein aff an only the rafters left, the sun cast some o it's warmth ontae him. He lookit for a place tae sit himsel doon but the only bit that seemed tae be clear o broken timmer an rottin thack wiz the big fire grate at the seaward gavel eyne o the hoosie, so he made his wye tae it for tae rest his weary beens.

The fire itsel wiz as simple as could be, jist layers o sclate biggit up like a wee dyke aboot twa fit heich an twa yairds by twa yairds squaar, wi big iron branner fittid in the centre tae hud the peats an driftwid that would've been used as fuel. The fleer aroon the fire wiz decked oot in big sclate slabs.

The man, feelin affa weak, used his fit tae clear awa some o the scattered rotten thack and sat doon wi his back anent the fire.

Lookin roon the hoosie he winnert fit hid come o Megan and her goat. The fine heat fae the sun an bein oot o the breeze made the man relax.

His hoosekeeper back at the big hoose hid offered him that very mornin a huge chop and eggs for his braakfast but he'd refused it kennin fine he'd jist boak it back up. The hoosekeeper faa'd kent the man syne he wiz but a bairn scolded him, sayin he'd hiv tae ait something or else he'd dee. He couldna tell her that's exactly fit wiz happenin, an that another bout o the fever wid pit him tae the kirkyard. He could see the disappointment on her face at his refusal but he'd nae appetite ava. Funny though, but at this very moment he could be deein wi the chop and eggs.

The warm sun cast its heat ower him as he sat there musin aboot the fine mait. Slowly he drifted aff tae sleep and fin he awoke wi a jolt he wiz sittin in the shadas for the sun wiz weel doon by this time. Stiff kind aboot the hochs, he got tae his feet an rabbit his gamms tae get the circulation gyan. He cursed a bittie, for that wiz een o the symptoms o the comin fever. First the shudders, then the sleekness, then the cramps aa leadin tae the delirium that this time there'd be nae comin back fae. He did feel a bittie woozy but funnily enough the seekness wiz awa.

By the time he wun hame tae the big hoose he wiz actually feelin a bit better. The aal hoosekeepers face fair lichted up fin he speired at her if she'd made ony supper. Fussin aboot like an aal mither hen, she made him ham an eggs an aa the while gyan on aboot the fresh air deein him gweed.

She stoppit fit she wiz deein an said, "Ken this yer Lairdship?

Even the colour his come back tae yer face!” afore dishin him up his supper.

Aifterhins the man complimented the aal cook on sic a fine supper and saw her smile shyly, an look for aa the wORLD like a mither henny watchin ower her wayward chuckin. Feelin a bit wappit he said goodnight an wint for an early nicht. Gyan up tae his aal familiar room, he lay on the bed wi a groan.

He awoke baithed in the licht o the full meen and shiverin but he wiz pleased tae realise nae wi the fever but genuinely wi the caal, for he'd nae happit himsel wi the blanket fin he'd laid himsel doon. Coverin himsel he wiz soon asleep eence mair and awoke late wi the moonlight replaced by the bricht sunlight. He lay as he wiz and lookit aroon his aal room and felt for the first time in a lang fyle contentment and a feelin o hope he'd nae felt for years. In fact the feelin o serenity wid've best explained it. The reality wiz that he'd nivver felt affa weel since the very first time he'd teen the fever and each time thereafter it only got worse. In his years in Ceylon he'd seen mony a person dee wi it includin his ain wife.

Jist afore the monsoon wiz the time maist fowk teen it. The heat at that time could sometimes become unbearable, even though Ceylon wiz an island and usually blessed by sea breezes. The British at this time jist deet like flees wi it as the wee cemetery at Darlee could attest. The cemetery there wiz full o them.

A big plate o ham and eggs awyted him doon in the kitchen served wi the smilin hoosekeeper.

He'd tae ait there at present, as the rest o the hoose hid been closed doon by his father years afore fin the debts hid began tae

mount. Michty the aal hoosekeeper wiz kinichted fin he'd cleared the plate an fin he speired for anither cup o tay. Ye wid've thocht he'd bestowed some kind o honour ontae her. He made a mental note tae mak sure his hoosekeeper wiz weel provided for.

That day he spent maist o't gyan throwe his late father's papers jist tae see fit wiz actually left o his granfather's fortune. By late aifterneen he realised things maybe werena as bad as he'd first thocht. His granda hid been a gye astute businessman so quite a lot o the estate hid been tied up in a wye his father hidna been able tae access easily tae pile debts on. But there wiz still huge debts on the estate itsel that wid need the ither bit tae clear his yardairm, sadly leavin the man aa but bankrupt.

Feeelin the need for some air an a bittie time tae think, he wint oot for a bit traivel. Afore leavin the hoose though he teen a wee flagon wi him, for some o the waal water fae Megan's hoosie. He fairly thocht him drinkin it the day afore hid deen him weel. He could still feel the stirrins o the bone deep shiver fae the fever aa the same though.

It wiz a fine saaft forenicht and he enjoyed his walk tae the coast. At the heed o Megan's cove he sat doon for a whilie lookin oot ower the sea. Michty but he'd missed that view, an mony's the time in delirium he'd dreamed aboot this very view and could even feel the saaft cool breeze blawin roon him. Noo here wiz he back in reality wi little but loomin debt and illness for the future. Leastwyes fitivver future he micht hae if the fever takts him eence mair intae it's iron grip. Shiverin much worse noo, an waves o seekness washin throwe his body, he made his wye doon intae Megan's cove.

The forenicht wiz weerin on as the licht began tae fail doon here in the shadas o the cove. He first wint tae the waal an slaiket o his thirst then fulled the wee flagon o the fine ironerie water an poocched it. He made his wye tae the ruins an sat himsel doon at the aal fire. He wiz feelin so affa tired, in fact mair tired than he'd ivver been afore...

He awoke wi a start, and it teen him a minty tae mind faar aboot he wiz. He jist sat awa a while watchin the moonbeams licht up the rafters, wi their eerie shadas on the fleer o Megan's hoosie. He'd nae idea o the time but kent it must be gye late for the full meen wiz heich up. He wanted tae staan up but he felt so gweed inside he jist sat awa faar he wiz. Instead the man jist sat basked in the moonlicht, feart tae move in case he broke the spell o this feelin so gweed and the feelins o serenity that wint wi it. If he moved, he'd be back intae the misery o fever wracked beens and the despair at the thochts o the huge debts his faither his left him wi.

In his mind's ee the man resurrected Megan's hoosie oot o the moon shadas and could even visualise her scutterin at the big table. She'd eence tellt him her aal faither hid fashioned oot o a timmer gratin that hid been washed ashore fae the deck o a man-o-war that hid come tae grief at the wastmaist heedlan fae the cove. In the shadas he could still see bits o it as it lay ontae its side. Then it wiz richt wyes up and tae his surprise he could see Megan ficherin wi something on the very table. Peerin hard, he saw it wiz a bunch o herbs or some sic thing.

The vision o Megan turned towards him and he could've swore she smiled but fin he heard the bleatin o a goat and felt it touch

him gently on the face he weakly put oot his haan an ruffled the wee woolie heedie o Maizie. He kent then that he wiz dyn. The man didna fecht against it an jist alloed the fine feelins o scerenity tae tak him. He wiz at peace wi the world entirely, the pain an distress gone fae him.

He slowly lookit up and saw Megan standin abeen him, wi a concerned look on her face and felt her haan wipe his fevered broo. Her touch felt cool, then Maizie bleated and gave him a nudge as if she wanted him tae play as she'd deen so many years afore.

Megan spoke tae him, "Ae me yer Lairdship yer back wi us in the land o the livin?"

He wiz in his ain room, an instead o Megan his aal hoosekeeper wiz dichtin his broo wi a caal weet cloot. He tried tae spikk but she shushed him sayin he needed tae rest a while.

Aboot a wikk later, the man sat in a basket cheer outside the big French widae at the front o the hoose. He wiz weel wuppit up in a plydie tae keep oot chill in the weak Autumn sun. But he'd nae real need o it for he wiz feelin that fine in body an soul. There wiz a wee table at his side, wi a flagon o the clear ironeerie water fae Megan's waal. Een o the loons fae the kailyard wint doon ilka day for a flagon for him. He swore by the Almighty that as day follyt day he could feel the fever leavin his beens. The aal hoosekeeper came oot wi a loaded tray o breid an kebbach for him.

Oh me, she'd been affa come at fin he'd nae returned that nicht a wikk syne. She'd alerted the bylie an his men faa hid scoored the country lookin for him. They'd searched for aa that nicht but nae hide nor hair hid they fun o him. It'd been the early dawnin fin the

fisher quines on their wye tae get bait for the lines hid come upon him in a gye state. Nae kennin faa he wiz, they teen him mair deed than alive tae the constable in the toon.

It'd been aboot that time a messenger hid arrived fae the big hoose wi the tidins that the Laird hid geen missin the nicht afore. The surgeon hid visited the constable's hoose an ordered that he be given gunpooder an brandy mixed three times a day. But seemingly even throwe his delirium, the man refused that point blank.

Back at the big hoose the man hid speired at the hoosekeeper if she kent Megan's hoose. An fine did she. So he tellt her tae get een o the loons fae the kailyard tae fetch him a flagonfae. Aifster a couple days o in an oot o delirium the man slowly recovered aifster the fever brook. Whether it wiz fae Megan's waal water or whether it brook on its ain, the man made a good recovery.

Noo here he wiz sittin in the low autumn sun wi a tray loaded wi breid and kebbach. She served him his water an garred him ait o the oatcakes an cheese her cure for aathing. The man smilin teen some tae please her onywye then she hurried awa sayin something aboot her pot.

That aifterneen the surgeon came inaboot tae see him an wiz fair delighted wi the man's remarkable recovery, sayin he knew the gunpooder an brandy wid dee the trick! The man said nithing aboot that, an jist spoke roon the subject leavin the surgeon tae his belief o the efficacy o his cure. Oot in Ceylon that hid been the standard treatment for fevers but the man thocht it put mair fowk tae the box than ivver it did cure. He thocht in the heat a mixture o gunpooder an brandy brocht on epilepsy, an the patient mair than usually deet o

that. Tae the man it seemed that alcohol that wiz so dangerous in the heat, and for that reason alone he'd nae teen the 'cure' gunpowder naewithstandin.

An idea hid been formin in his mind, an eence the surgeon teen his leave he wint back tae the estate papers tae check oot something. Aifter a bit o a search among his granda's papers, he found the deeds tae Megan's hoosie. He saw that it hid been changed tae include Megan aifter the death o her aal mither. It stipulated that she, Megan, hid been given the hoosie for as lang as she lived and the same wid apply tae ony faimly she hid.

Megan nivver hid faimly so it came back tae the estate. The man couldna understand why his granda jist hidna given Megan's mither the hoosie ootricht. It wisna till later he found oot that if he'd deen that then Megan's mither wid've hin tae pey a huge poll tae the crown wi the hoosie bein jist abeen high water mark. This wye the estate peyed that tax leavin the aal woman and Megan free fae interference by officers o crown lands. The man smiled as he mind on his granda's kindly face. Nae muckle Lairds even till this day wid be that considerate.

A fyowe weeks later the man employed a mason tae bigg a wee steen hoosie abeen the waal usin some o the steen fae Megan's hoosie. He advertised it in the journals as a health cure an fowk wid come fae far an near tae partake o it and drink o the healthy ironerie waters.

So popular did it become that the man hid tae get the vricht tae bigg wee bothies so fowk could bide in them for the fresh air, the takkin o the waters and sea bathin. The man cleared the debts o his

faither in a fyowe short years and even managed tae buy back the tea plantation in Ceylon. He nivver wint back oot there though, instead he left his freen Mr Sarkar tae rin it for him. Since drinkin o the waters himsel he'd nivver teen the fever again and there wiz nae wye he wiz gyan tae push his luck gan oot there and getting anither dose o it.

My 3x3 times great granda the Reverend S. Gow wrote the first part o this story in the early aichteen twinties, the second part in the mid aichteen forties. He must've known 'the man' tae be able tae write the story as he did. But in nae place diz he name him. In the first part he refers tae Megan only as 'the witch doctor', so I caad her Megan for clarity. The twa names he diz mention though are Johnny and Maizie the goat.

Mair norr a hunner years aifster my Great Granda wrote the story the waal dried up. Tae this very day the waters are gone but the wee waal hoosie is still there but noo sadly in a gye state o disrepair.

I can add something though, that the Reverend Gow didna ken, or leastwyes his journals are quate on the subject; though throwe Johnny he micht've suspected there wiz mair till it than meets the eye.

If ye gang tae the toon, speir at ony o the locals faar aboot is the wee waal hoosie that fowk eesed tae come tae partake o the waters. They'll seen pit ye on the richt road tae it.

In Megan's time it wiz jist a sanny track ye teen doon intae the cove but noo there's a bonny tarred road. As ye mak yer wye doon

intae the cove ye'll see the waal hoosie as I explained it, and if ye gyang inaboot tae it ye'll notice the doorway his been built ower so ye winna be able tae wun inside.

Fin I wiz a bairn I saw the inside o it eence. At each side rinnin the length o the hoosie there's a bench made o sclate faar fowk wid sit. At the gavel eyne there's a wee basin faar the waal water flowed intae it. Fowk wid've used a wee pewter ladle tae full their coggies tae drink o the health givin waters while sittin on the sclate benches. Fowk wid spikk aboot how gweed it made them feel and how they came awa wi a strange sense o serenity they'd nivver felt afore.

Now; though there's nae doot ava that the waters did hae some health benefits. But that canna explain the feelins o serenity that wint wi it. But ye dinna need the waaters for that gweed feelins. Aa ye noott dee is sit yersel doon at the yett o the built up doorwy'e for a fylie and if it's a fine day ye micht be lucky enough tae drift aff for a forty winks as the man did so lang lang ago in Megan's hoosie doon at Tarlair.

If yer nae feelin weel in body an soul or jist feelin the weicht o the warld on yer shooders aifter a haaf oor sittin there ye'll come awa wi the finest feelins o serenity ye've ivver felt in yer life afore. The reason for this wiz that fin Johnny teen his leave o Megan an Maizie he blessed them and Megan's hearth steen. The very hearth steen that wiz used in makkin the benches and the fleer o the wee waal hoosie. So fin yer sittin at the yett o the door yer only inches awa fae the blessed hearth steen! And that wiz 'Johnny's Blessing'.

Panloaf- You Know!

Hector Puddins landed a cracker o a job up at Sullom Voe in the Shetlands at the start o the North Sea oil boom. He wiz a shutterin jiner and wiz vrochtin at the makkin o new piers for supply boats tae land. This wiz the early 70s and he wiz earnin £300 a week, a fortune back then I'm tellin ye. (At the time Hector wiz gettin £300 quid a week I wiz earnin £4-8/6d a week as an apprentice painter cove!) He wiz fower weeks on an one week aff and wi the week aff he usually spent it scutterin aboot wi different D.I.Y. projects.

He'd made a wall unit oot o marine ply tae show aff his wife's capidemonty figurine ornaments and hid papered the livinroom waas wi the latest woodchip paper. Oh michty they were affa grand!

Ilka time he came hame his wife, enterin intae the spirit o their new life as middle class citizens, wanted an animal skin coat. Ae me heedy got an affa size. Tae emphasise their new status she wanted an animal skin cwite or 'coat' as she now caad it, so that fin she waikit doon the street her lower class freens wid be green wi pure envy.

Ower the next fyowe months Mrs Puddins keepit harpin on at Hector aboot an animal skin coat. Eventually Hector relented and said the next time he wiz hame they'd gyang intae Aiherdeen and he'd buy her an animal skin cwite. Oh me Mrs Puddins wiz fair ower the meen wi this and wiz ettilin for the month tae pass.

Michty she wiz tellin her chums that, "My husband (a month or twa afore she wid've said 'Ma man' noo it wiz 'My husband') wiz

gan tae purchase an animal skin coat once he returned from his business trip.”

She'd really entered intae the spirit o things and effected the panloaf wye o spikkin endin sentences wi, “You know!” Nae as a question but as a statement o fact that left ye in nae doot ava that she wiz o a better class noo. Oh me, ye've nae idea!

She stoppit gyan tae Tam Dow's shop for eerins but noo wint there for to 'purchase groceries'. Och, sicin ongyans I'm tellin ye! Onywyne time passed and Hector Puddins came hame fae his 'business trip' (up tae his waist in gutters and chappin marine ply hoardins roon new jetties mair like.) Business trip indeed!!

Oh mighty, but he wiz treated like a king fin he got hame. Steak, chips an haaf a dizzen fried eggies were produced afore he got his beets aff. Mrs Puddins hid really pulled oot aa the stops on this yin I'm tellin ye. Even a bottle o Blue Nun's vinegar - I mean wine - wiz produced wi a flourish and poored intae glaisses wi thistles on the side. (Noo the time I'm spikkin aboot, fowk in Macduff thocht that 'Blue Nun wiz the ultimate name for vinegar - -I mean wine-. I'm tellin ye!)

Onyhow I digress, so on wi the story. Mrs Puddins hid even wint as far as purchased (bocht) eye mascara fae Max Factor so that fin she made sheepie's eenies at her husband he'd notice the flickerin. For desert she lead him tae her boudoir for a bittie o horizontal P.T. but I winna gyang intae ony details here but leave that tae yer ain dirty minds.

Next morning, bricht and early Mr & Mrs Puddins caught the Alexander's Bluebird bussie tae Aiberdeen, noo 'Aberdeen' accordin

tae Mrs Puddins wi her newfound panloaf spikkin, 'You know!'

For the whole journey aa she spoke aboot wiz the animal skin coat and how she'd be needin to 'discard her old friends as not being fit company for the likes of her. You know!'

On an on this wint aa the wye tae Aiber- - I mean Aberdeen.

Michty, fin they got there boorachs o fowk were heavin their wye past eenanither at an aff rate. Oh me, sic ongyans I'm tellin ye!

They wint intae a cafe for a pie and a cuppy o tay much tae Mrs Puddins's consternation sayin;

"If any of my friends could see me now I should be most affronted!"

Lookin aroon aa the fowk she said, "Just as well we aren't in Macduff for them to see us!"

Hector by this time wiz mashin the fine greasy pie doon his neck and slurpin at his tay like a pig at the trochie. She pushed her pie awa fae her wi a ladylike shudder and teen oot a packet o fags. They were fancy Russian fags o different colours that een o her heroines smoked in her favourite romantic novels. But oh the stink I'm tellin ye!

Hector wavin awa the reek speired at his spouse if she wiz seekin the pie. She shook her heed puffin awa at the guff o waur fag. Her pie seen follyt the first een straacht doon Hector's thrapple and a load of the maist affa slurpin sounds fae his tay.

Aifter braakfast noo 'break-fast' they made their wye doon Market street towards the fancy shops that sellt animal skin coats.

She near fell a couple o times wi her stiletto heel shoes on the cassiesteens, nae the best surface tae walk wi that kind o sheen, I'm

tellin ye! But accordin tae her she dare not go for an animal skin coat wearing anything else. You know!

They passed a few o the big fancy shops that sellt animal skin coats and Mrs Puddins wiz gettin a bit worried at this.

Hector says, "In here!" as they struck left doon the steps intae the New Market.

There wiz raas o shops sellin aa kinds o stuff, but for some reason it didna hae the ambiance o a place that sellt posh animal skin coats. But jist as Mrs Puddins wiz beginnin tae panic they came upon a funcier lookin place wi a big sign proclaimin it tae be:

'The Tatt Boutique'.

In they wint and Hector walked inaboot tae a quine filing at her nails. A quiet conversation later and she left tae gyang throwe the back. Mrs Puddins started makkin sheepie's eenies at her loving husband once again. In fact her eenies were flutterin so fast there wiz even crummles o mascara on her eebroos.

The lassie returned wi a coat ontae a hanger covered in tissue type paper. Oh michty, but Mrs Puddins near wint intae a swoon like her heroine wid've done in the novels.

Hector teen it fae the lassie and said, "Here my darling your animal skin coat!"

Oh me, she near fintid wi this and she managed a "Thank you my darling husband!" blowing him kisses tae boot.

She took the coat and tore aff the paper tae reveal a 'donkey jaicket' the ultimate animal skin cwite! "You Know!"

The Vet's Tale.

Aal Geordie fae the Mains o Slacktackit wiz sittin readin the Banffshire Journal in front o the fire. His wife Maggie wizoot feedin the chuckins an fyaachin aboot lookin for eggies. So he thocht tae himsel he'd get a look at the 'Banffie' afore she wun back in. There wisna muckle o interest tae Geordie but jist afore he wint tae the 'faa's deed' column his ee caught on an article aboot a new technique caad artificial insemination. Mighty, but that's a gye handy like advancement and it wid save a lot o siller forbyes. Always een o Geordie's maist important come ats against the world. Foo bliddy expensive athing wiz getting. He teen oot his bit pencil fae his wastcoat pooch and gave the pint a sook, an wrote the vet's number doon on the margin o the paper an tore it oot.

The 'faa's deed column' clear forgotten aboot, he's ontae the phone an spikkin tae the vet.

"Aye- - aye- - tye tye aye fairly at! Aricht we'll see ye then than- - - "Eh?- - oh aye aye aye this is Geordie fae the Mains min!"

"Fit's at? Ye dinna ken faa I am? Mighty laddie this is een o the best set up placies in the district min! - - - Aricht-aricht dinna get yersel in a fleerip! Here's the directions- - - ! Tye tye fairly at we'll see ye the morn than!"

Jist then Mistress Mains hersel came in as Geordie hung up the phone. Her ee fell upon the Banffie lyin in a sotter on the fleer wi a great big fyang torn oot o't.

"Oh mighty!" said she and bent doon tae gaither up the paper.

“Fit wye did ye dee that min?”

Geordie still thinkin on aa the siller he’d be savin hardly heard her. But she noticed the big fyang o paper still in his haan wi the vet’s number written on’t and grabbed it fae him. Grummlin she sorted the paper intae order an wi a bittie sellotape she stuck the torn oot bittie intae place.

Aifter she calmed doon a bittie he tellt her aa aboot this new technique caad artificial insemination an foo muckle siller it wid save him. Mrs Mains relented in her anger a bit fin she heard the magic words ‘foo muckle siller it wid save’, for she wisna kent as ‘Greed’s Grunny’ by the workers for nithing. The peer men were fed on nithing but neeps an meal. Neep brose for braakfast, neep brose for denner an for supper murlietuck made wi neep bree an fylies a curl o kail for a bit o a change! There wisna sic a thing as constipation at the Mains o Slacktackit, dam ee fears o’t!

Onywyne the neist day the vet made his appearance and he lookit ower Geordie’s beasts. Fyaachin here an fyaachin there speirin Geordie this or speirin that he gid them a gweed owergyan.

Feenished he says tae Geordie, “Ye’ve some rare beasts there min. I’d say they’d be perfect specimens for the new science o artificial insemination.”

He lookit aboot the byre and aifter a minty or twa said, “But ye’ll noott tae get this place in order for it’s in a gye sotter for the artificial insemination. Ye see we maun gyang wi the very strict rules set oot by the government in this instance.”

He gid throwe fit wiz nottin deen. The wobbs an styowe doon fae the rafters an waaheds, the staas cleaned oot an the timmer

treated wi sclatelime mixed wi vinegar, fresh strae laid, the waas coated wi beverley white distemper and the greip scoored an cleaned wi saaft soap an saan. An then he'd come back in a wikk's time an tick aff the list afore continuing wi the artificial insemination as per government rules.

Aifter the vet drove awa Geordie wint knypin throwe the close tae faar his three lads were vrochtin at the dung.

"Come on noo lay doon yer forks I've gotten a fine warm jobbie for ye!"

He gid them their orders at the byre an gye near hid a mutiny on his haans. Na na, the lads werena haein that. Vrochtin at a styowie blawvethrowe place like that for a wikk an bein fed on neeps aa the time? Na na, dam ee fears o't they'd tak their mairchin orders first. Geordie hid tae relent in the end, so he offered them a wee bit renumeration and nae mair 'tatties an pint' or in their case 'neeps an pint'. They'd be getting the same mait as himsel instead o sittin in the kitchen pointin throwe the hoose faar he Geordie wiz gettin the very best o food. Well, leastwyes for the next wikk onywyne but he nivver tellt them that bit though. Sleekit aal deevil!

Onywyne the vrocht wint on at a rate o knots wi this new arrangement. The lads were even tae be heard singing as they yokit tee. Mrs Mains wisna ower happy though an there wiz near a tear in her ee as she served them up wi gweed mait. But Geordie reassured her it widna last forivver an that a couple mair days should see things back tae normal. She smiled at the conspiracy. The pair o sleekit devils!

Onywyne the byre wiz sittin like a new preen by the time the

vet returned. Impressed he wint throwe the list tickin aff each item as deen and in accordance tae government rules. Geordie wi his chestie fair stickin oot teen him throwe the amount o vrocht deen as if it wiz only him that did it.

“The styowe wiz teen doon fae the waaheeds an rafters, the waas coated wi beverley white as ordered, the staas cleared oot an the timmer deen wi sclatelime an vinegar as ordered wi fresh strae laid on the grun an the greip scoored wi saft soap an saan also as ordered.”

The vet wiz affa impressed an said, “Michty me min ye’ve forgotten nithing ava!”

Geordie wi his heedy fair swingin said, “An there’s even a nail at the back o the door for ye!”

The vet hid a quick look at his list tae see far aboot he tellt him tae pit a nail in the back o the door but dam ee bit he could see nae mention o that ava?

He says tae Geordie, “I nivver tellt ye tae pit a nail in the back o the door!”

Geordie wi his heedy still swingin said, “I ken that richt enough but it’s my idea.”

The vet getting really puzzled speird, “Fit wid I be needin a nail in the back o the door for?”

Geordie getting a wee bit angert says, “Well it’s for the artificial insemination ye’ll need someplace tae hing yer breeks!

I needna say here fit the vet’s reply wiz but it could be heard at the ither side o the fairm yard faar the lads were in the kitchie back tae suppin neep brose. They’d nae sympathy for the greedy, sleekit aal bastard!

Hanyakies: The Wee Cowies in the Veesh.

[*The little people in the wood*]

The 'Wee Hantle'[little people] or 'Gweed Fowk' are only wee craiters, aboot the hicht o a body's fammil and are dressed in green suits and the bonniest wee tychies[shoes/boots] on their tramplers[feet] ye ever did deek [see/look]. The leather is that black ye could use them for a mirror and each tychie has a gowd buckle on it encrusted by emeralds teen ower fae Ireland.

The 'Wee Cowies'[little people] like tae bide intae aal ruined castles or Pagan forts and like nothing better than tae come oot in moonlicht making music playing the fiaps [pipes] fiddles an dancin till jist afore the dawning when they bing [go] back underground intae their forts and castles.

In Scotland oor 'Wee Hantle' wear a reed Tam-o-shanter on their tests [heads] and hae a tartan plydie wuppit ower their left shooeder and each has a wee crummoch made o hazel, rowan or blackthorn tae garr ye loup with if they've a mind tae.

They're happy craters though and ayee like a good laach, that's why they can be illtricket at times, it's only for reels so they can get a laach at hantle they've played tricks on. But sometimes they can and do gee some hantle their comeuppence if deserved. Here's one such tale.

There was a Traiveller by the name o Charlicky and a queer deekin [looking] goorie[man] was he with the sourest chackers [face] a body would ever want to see.

A bully of a man, he was bonny and shan [bad] to his collich [woman/wife] and used tae pager [thrash] her when he was peevie [drunk]. And God help the poor dilly [lassie] if Charlicky had gotten mowdied [a good thrashing] by some of the other Traivellers. He'd gyang hame and takk it oot on her as bully's are apt tae dee.

One time they were campit intae a veesh [woods] in the back o beyond but whit they didnae jan [know] was that they were near a Faerie Rath.

The ‘Wee Hantle’ [little people] watched Charlicky pager his collich like a jookle[dog] and were none too pleased.

Tae the ither Traivellers she was known as the ‘Panda’ on account o the black yaks [eyes] she got from her gadgie [man] when he came hame in a mess of drink.

Nae wanting to get involved in the workings of man the ‘Wee Hantle’ did nothing till one night he nearly killed the lassie. They couldna takk it anymore so they put the sleep on him and paggered his fammils with their wee blackthorn crummochs to punish the croint [nutcase/idiot].

Next mornin aifter the peeve [drink] and the magic sleep had worn off he awakened with his fammils in pure living agony, big carbuncles the size o doo's yarras [eggs] ontae every joint.

“O shannish shannish!” he cried tae his collich.

“Ma fammils are feikit[fucked] aathegither Ah’m that sair A’h canna even pick ma ain snotterbox, ae me, ae me!”

Well he munted [cried] till his collich took the last puckle coppers left in his pooches aifter all the peeve the nicht before and bung [went] intae the toon tae get the clochter [doctor] for her gadgie. She bung [came] back alang with the clochter in his gig. He deeked at her goorie's [man's] fammils and said that he'd teen arthritis and gave her some peels for him tae take for the pain and charged three halfcroons for the pleasure.

Aifster the clochter left, Charlicky wint for his mort [woman] like a whirlin dervish aboot the lore [money], calling her all the pannies [bamsticks] under the sun. He sollached [swore] at her for one oor and a half athoot ever once repeating himself. The slaivers fleein fae his moiy [mouth] in strings and the very yaks [eyes] bulging in his heed as he sollached at her.

He kept roaring aboot the lowie [money] till he lost the rag and tried tae mak a kick at her. He couldna give it the Cabrach sweetie [back hand slap] as usual cause his fammils were that sair.

She jumped back oot o his way shouting at him, “Ye coordy sleekit bastard!” afore wulltin [hitting] him on yin o his sair fammils with a spurtle.

He squealed like a guffy [pig], it was that sair and tripped ontae a stane lyin aside the camp fire. She didnae deek the gift horse in the moiy [mouth] an teen full advantage o her goorie rollin aboot the grun by running at him an standin fair square ontae his fammils.

Years o pent up fury then erupted fae her, and the memories of all the kickings sleekit Charlicky hid given her boiled over intae one mighty kick at his sweetie bag. By good luck for him it didna land in his gowls [balls] but at the lusk o his groin, though he still squealed

mair in fear than pain. It put its damaged fammils doon tae protect its gowlies fae next kick and this time her tychie [shoe] landed richt on target but it wiz the fammils that got it instead o its gowls, but the effect wiz ivvery bit as effective as if the gowlies did get it.

It screamed like a barrow load of scalded loochies [rats] with its yaks sticking out like hundog's pyocks. He didna wakin up for aboot an hour and that was only because some ither Traiveller finding him unconscious threw a bucket o monti [water] ower him tae take him roon.

His collich was lang avree [away] back tae its nesmort [mother] wi aa the kinchins[children] in towe. So it lay muntin [crying] in the campy for three hours and seven days over his sair fammils and its collich leaving him with the chavies [children].

Eventually it jumped up, did two buck-leaps in the air and said oot loud, "Ah'm aheedin [do not care] ma corrigh[mad] collich's avree, let it rin, Ah'll soon get masel another mort [woman] for am Ah nae a fine figure o a man?"

Aye though it was tae get a richt mort later on. The dilly [lassie] came over fae Ireland with a reed head on it and she could make him jump and clour [claw] whit wisnae itchy. She'd a tongue on her that could clip cloots and it could fecht like a gadgie. Nae a Traiveller or ruchy [country person] was safe fae her and they ended up mowdied [murdered, a good thrashing]. That's the goories [men] I'm mangin [talking] aboot; the collichs were all trash [scared] an didnae cross her. A bonny dose o paggerins he got fae that mort I'm telling ye!

Aifter that he wint by the name of 'Hanyackies' because of the

black yaks [eyes] and the carbuncles on his fammils that never wint avree. Every time it got yet anither peelachin [thumping] fae his mort, the ‘Wee Hantle’ rolled aboot the grun laughing wi the tears streaming doon their cheeks like the second flood.

Many’s the time the ‘Wee Hantle’ wid put the sleekit yowt [hit] ontae its fammils with their crummochs fin it was slumming [sleeping]. He’d waken up screaming and his mort would give him yet anither paggerin for interupting her beauty sleep in the middle o the nicht.

Oh shannish shannish! Come in yer was, cove![a bad situation friend]

Tales fae Dr Festing Makadoork's case book:
The Tabby Sooker.

In my long medical career I have came across many strange cases but none stranger than the one I'm about to relate.

A few years ago a man was referred to me from his GP. with an extremely strange addiction. I am somewhat of an expert when it comes to addictions, so he was sent to me to see if I could effect a cure. The patient in question was a man in his mid forties but looked older and had the haunted look of an addict. Of good character and a pillar of the local community, he had more than most to lose because of his strange addiction. It was the summer of 2006 when I first met him. From the copious notes and recordings I took at the time I'll tell his story in his own words.

* * *

"Fin I wiz wee I used tae pick up tabbies fae the road an walk aboot sayin tae my pals, "Look at me I'm a mannie!"

Noo this started aff as a bit o a joke in front o my pals but as I grew an masel became a 'mannie' it changed intae something else entirely.

I hiv nivver smoked in my life an canna stand the smell o folk smokin fags. But a tabby, noo that's a different matter aathegither. Fin I see a tabby on the grun I jist hiv tae eat it. I wiz gye careful though that naebody should see ma deein this. Mind you on a couple o occasions I wiz nearly rumbled but each time I got awa w't by sayin;

"I canna stand tabbies on the grun!" and promptly put the

tabby in the nearest bin. “Bliddy smokin should be against the law!” Only half meanin it, though. Aifter that couple o occasions I became ultra careful tae hide my addiction fae fainly an freens.

I hid a special pooch in ma jaicket lined wi bakin foil for my githerins. I’d even hae wee fantasies aboot eatin them fin I got hame. Sometimes though the thocht o fine tabby wiz literally burnin a hole in ma pooch so I’d slip awa tae hide an wi great relish I’d sook the tabby then chaw it up tip ana. The tip wiz the icing on the cake as far as I wiz concerned.

The slaivers in ma mooth released the juices an fin I chawed it the nicotine bree added so much flavour tae the tabbacca and the paper. But the best bit o the lot is the wee black burnt bit on the end. I always saved it till last. This is the cherry, the caviar o the tabby or the truffle. I’d roll it aboot in ma mooth then wi a gasp o pleasure I’d crush it wi ma tongue on the roof o ma mooth.

This wint on for a gye puckle years afore I teen TB. Fin I wint tae the doctor he wiz puzzled why I should hae TB. Aifter a lot o questions, I’d eventually tae own up tae my addiction. The doctor thocht that wiz the maist likely source for the TB. Aiftherhin I wiz sent tae see Doctor Festing Makadoork.

At his suggestion I wint tae a self help group ran by him for addictions. The first time I wint fin it came my turn tae staan up and tell the group faa I wiz and my particular addiction.

Aabody burst oot laachin at ma and shoutin, “Tabby Sooker!”

So I ran awa an wint tae my special stash o tabbies an ate the lot. As a comfort ye’ll understand. It teen Dr Makadoork weeks and a lot o priggin afore I wint back.

Aboot this time the smokin ban came intae force and though as a non smoker I wiz pleased aboot it, my perfect source o tabbies wiz teen awa fae ma. Before the ban, so as nae tae be discovered, I usually wid ging intae a pub jist afore closing time fin aa bugger wiz getting tipsy kind. I'd order a half pint o India Pale Ale and slowly move fae ashtray tae ashtray helpin masel tae its contents. Ye've nae idea the amount o tabbies I got that wye. But noo, wi the smoking ban that source wiz fucked! Onywyne I decided enough wiz enough and wint back tae therapy for addiction.

Things were good for a while especially aifter Dr Makadoork showed me a replacement therapy I could use. He'd scatter bits o carrots aboot the fleer cut intae the shape o tabbies and I'd tae makie on they were the real thing. An christ it fairly workit for a while until I ate so much fuckin carrots I turned orange and could see in the dark better than ony fuckin cat!

Onywyne there wiz trouble aheed for ma an this is how it came aboot.

Ae Sunday mornin afore I wint tae the kirk I decided tae hae a wee traivel doon for a Sunday paper. On the wye I met quite a lot o people I knew and wid doff my hat tae them for I wiz a respected member o the local community. So what, ye might be thinking. Well it wiz aifter I'd doffed my hat tae a particularly important person that I noticed ootside the pub loads o tabbies. Noo, wi the smoking ban drinkers hid tae gyang ootside tae partake o their disgusting habit an eence they finished they'd ping their tabbies oot ontae the street.

My knees gave a buckle at the sight as I imagined aitin them and by good fortune I tripped and rolled amongst the tabbies. Nae a

man known for missing opportunities, I made good use o my time rollin aboot the grun an fulled ma pooches. Some folk came inaboot and helped ma tae ma feet dustin ma doon and askin if I wiz aricht.

“Oh I’m fine!” I replied acting the pillar o society that I am.
“Jist tripped on an uneven bit on the pavement!”

I noticed though that the local gossip wiz there ana and her nose nearly wint inside ma mooth snuffin tae see if I’d been drinkin. Satisfied that there wisna drink ontae ma breath, she helped the githered folk tae dust ma doon and even handed me my hat sayin in her greetin winging voice;

“It’s jist a disgrace the state o this pavements!”

I acknowledged that, sayin I’d raise it wi the local cooncil at the very next opportunity. God help ma but the pavements were perfect. I’d jist used the cooncil as a scapegoat and that tae the biggest greetin faced complainin aal bugger in the toon. How low can a man get? Oh me, jist wait and see! I couldna get awa fast enough afore some bastard realised that ma pooches were fulled tae brimmin wi tabbies. So off I goes doffin my hat tae the left and right and false words o thanks comin fae my tabby sookin mooth. Well soon tae be tabby sookin mooth.

I rushed hame as fast as my feeties wid cairry ma and charged past my wife as she waited tae gyang tae the kirk wi her latest extravagant silly hattie on her neep. She opened her mooth tae say something but too late as I made for the summer hoose and slammed the door. There I pigged oot on tabbies nae takkin time tae savour them jist packed them doon my throat. Fuck carrots!

Aifter so lang athoot a decent tabby I got a bit corkit, so teen

a couple bottles o seerups o figs and that seemed tae dee the trick.

At my next therapy session I'd tae admit tae Dr Makadoork that I'd fell aff the wagon a wee bittie.

He sat there doodlin in his notebook and asked, "How many tabbies did you take?"

Quick as a flash I said "Ten!"

He jist smiled at that and cairried on doodlin in his notebook. On the wye hame I wint in by the shop and bocht a pun o carrots.

For the next few weeks things wint aaricht. I'd even managed tae fool my wife aboot my bad behaviour that day at the summer hoose. Of course it teen a lash o cash intae her personal bank accoont and the promise o a Mediterranean cruise afore she forgave my bad behaviour.

It wiz a few weeks later I got anither opportunity while walkin tae my place o work. Dr Makadoork said that if I walked plenty in the clean fresh air that wid gyang some wye tae diminish my cravings. And richt he wiz aboot that until the mornin I saw the pile o tabbies lyin on the grun outside the pub. The street sweeper's cairt wiz there but nae a sign o him. I crouched doon ahin the cairt an fulled ma pooches o this manna fae heaven.

I hurried intae my office wi my treasure locked the door an pulled the screen doon. I sorted through my manna and put so much intae the wee tin box I kept for my stash. Some though I kept oot and jist gorged on them until I wiz nearly seek. I sat there gaspin wi pleasure fin my secretary knocked on my door and shouted that I'd tae be at the boardroom in ten minutes. Christ I'd better get rid o the smell o ashtrays fae ma breath so I used my secret weapon,

Fisherman's Friends. A half dizzen o them in yer gob and yer mooth, nasal cavities and yer very tear ducts are clear o smell.

Composed, I entered the board room and saw aa the pricks sittin there yabblin awa at eenanither as if they kent fit they were speakin aboot. Jinkers een an aa! Takkin ma place I nodded some acknowledgments tae the seated figures while the chairman opened the meeting in his usual wye wi jaded jokes that we were aa supposed tae laach at as if we hidna heard them a thoosand times afore.

That wiz fin my belly started makkin strange sounds. This wint on for a while and it got that bad the pricks sittin roon the table began tae notice and even the chairman forgot his stupid jaded jokes and looked at ma. I held my belly and stood up tae excuse masel fin I power vomited aa ower the place. My last conscious sight wiz some o the pricks standin up wi shocked looks on their faces at aa the tabbies an bits o carrots on the table. Some o them in my direct line were pickin bits oot o their mooths as they'd been ready tae makie on laugh at the chairmans fuckin stupid jokes.

Next I kent I wiz in hospital.

Ower the next fyowe weeks I got ivvery test known tae man. I wiz oot an in the Magnetic Resonance Scanner M.R.S. like a dog's tot. So mony o them did I get that that my heed became magnetic an they still couldna find fit bit o my brain triggered my addiction.

I didna ken I'd become magnetic until I wiz leavin the hospital. As I walked oot I found forceps and scalpels stickin tae back o my heed as I passed a trolley. I pulled them aff and threw them in the bucket. As I reached the main door a man that looked like a doctor held it open for ma and as I passed he screamed as his mooth

exploded oot the wye and I found masel covered in dental implants wi teeth stickin tae them.

Jesus I teen tae ma heels makkin as muckle noise as the man that jist lost thoosands o pounds worth o dental work. I ran oot the gates keepin clear o the iron bits and fair intae the path o a passin skaffy wagon. I stuck tae the side o't like a fridge magnet and screamed oot o ma but the driver nivver even heard ma. It wisna until he reached the land fill aboot aicht miles awa that he realised I wiz stuck tae the side o the wagon.

Aifter a gye Chavez him an some o his mates managed tae get me aff the skaffy wagon and put me inside an aal aluminum packin case which isna magnetic an teen me tae the hospital. At the hospital they realised their mistake and degaussed me in een o their machines tae reverse the magnetic field- - - !”

* * *

This is where the tapes end.

I did see him once again when he visited my office to tell me to shove my therapy up my arse!

So I said, “Fuck off you tabby sookin bastard!”

The Loupin Buck.

A n ould buck (tramp) wiz makin his wye through the Heilands. Times were tough and it hid been a gye lang road athoot a hoose. He cursed aneth his breath as the last o his worsted socks disappeared amongst the steens on the road. There must've been fower miles o 00 stickin tae the tar. His beets hid gone lang syne and the bits o them lay scattered twinty miles back the road. His now bare feet were freezin and ivvery noo an then he'd stop at the side o the road and massage some life back intae them.

This wint on for a puckle mair miles afore he came across a hedge. There he cut himsel a staave fae oot o the hedge and used it as a walkin stick. He'd hop on one fit for a hunner paces then change fit. This wye the fit he keepit aff the road warmed up a wee bitty, then he'd change fit. In this wye he made his progress throwe the Heilands.

Early one mornin he'd gotten up fae the dry ditch he'd been sleepin in fair frozen tae the marra o his beens. There wiz nae wye he could lie in the caal ony langer.

A hard freest wiz on the ould road, so it teen a fair minty tae get yokit. Hunner yards, change fit, anither hunner yards change fit on an on this wint for mile aifter mile.

Eventually as the licht wiz getting stronger he came

upon a clachan. Naebody wiz gyan aboot but he saw licht comin fae een o the hooses. As he reached it o aa the things he saw a richt bonny shinny shoe sittin at the chik o the door. Michty but it lookit affa weel lookit aifter. Polished tae a high gloss it sat there like an invitation fae the gods. He'd a quick raik tae see if the ither yin wiz there but nithing could he find. A furtive glance aboot him tae see if onybody wiz lookin he grabbed it up, an put it allo his ould army great-coat and teen tae his heels.

He held gyan till the clachan wiz oot o sicht and pechin like an bachelors horsie he sat doon at the side o the road an rabbit his feet because wi the rinnin they were dirrlin like buggery.

He teen the shoe oot fae aneth his cwite and pit it on his richt fit and oh me it wiz that fine. A thochty big kind but he'd be nottin that tae get the full eese o't. Onywyne aifter he'd cametee some he stood up and slapped the shoe on the grun. Michty but it wiz that fine tae feel gweed stout leather under his frozen fit.

Usin his stick he started tae hop alang the road. Noo though, he could hop for the guts o haaf a mile afore changing ower tae the ither fit. It wiz jist as weel the shoe wiz ower big for him so he could manage his left fit inside. He'd a thocht tae himsel aboot the shoe: 'Why wid it be there wiz only the one richt shoe sittin at the chik o the door?'

Hop, hop, hop, hop. He stopped hopin for a minty.

'Maybe faaivver echt this yin hid been cleanin the ither yin?' He started hop, hop, hop again but this time back the wye he'd came.

Nearin the clachin he teen aff the shoe and hid it in a ditch. He cairried on as afore; hop, hop, hop, for a puckle yards then change fit; hop, hop, hop. He steed ahin a dyke lookin at the hoosie he'd chores the shoe fae. As far as he could see naebody hid yet found the shoe wiz missin.

Tryin tae meld intae the steens o the dyke tae mak himsel near invisible his een nearly crawled fae their sockets ower the heed o the dyke. He keepit watch on the hoose like a sleekit futtritt wi a rubbitt. He hidna lang tae wyte afore the balloon wint up.

A big lad came tae the door usin an oxter stave. He lookit aroon for a wee while obviously tae find his shoe. That's fan he started tae roar oot; "Thome bathtard's thstole ma feckin thoe!" "Bathtard!" it roared and began jumpin up an doon on its richt fit.

The left leg hid but a stump on it. The slaivers were fleein fae its mooth and it keepit roarin "Bathtard!" ower and ower again. Some lichts in ither hooses started tae come on at aa this soon so oor ould buck slithered awa intae the haaf licht and made his wye back tae faar he'd left the shoe.

He lay there for maist o the mornin and fin he thocht

the stoor hid settled he made his wye back tae the clachan.
Leavin the shoe; it wiz hop, hop, hop, change fit hop, hop,
hop till he neared the clachan.

He tied up his richt fit aneth his great-coat then it wiz
a left fit hop, hop. In this method he made his wye tae the
hoose he'd chores the shoe fae and knocked at the door.
Aifter a wee whilie he heard the slap o one fit on the
flagsteens and the door opened.

An angry lookin man said, "Fit are you theekin?"

The ould buck put on his maist pitiful demeanour and
in a whinging tone said, wi an mock Irish accent;

"Oh me kind zur would you be having an ould left
shoe for a fellow creature that's fallen on hard toimes
beggarra?"

It wiz that bad o an Irish accent but the big panny
didna notice.

He grabbit the ould buck by the thrapple and roared
intae his jaws, "Wiz it you that thstole ma thoë?"

He shook the ould buck like a loochy roarin aa the
while. Aifter he'd spent his anger he stood there wi his chest
heavin.

The ould buck wi perfect timin managed a wheedlin
reply, "God bless us and save us from the holy blue smokes
but not a touch of your shoe did I take beggorra beggorra
murra murra murra!"

As he crossed himsel tae lend emphasis tae his complete honesty. Even rollin this een owards heaven and a wee muttered prayer and an ‘amen’ thrown in for good measure. Tae feenish it he pointed doon tae his bare left fit and simpered and put on a petted lippy.

“Ma poor fittie’s frozen!”

The big lad calmed doon a bit jist shook his heed and wint back intae the hoose slammin the door. The ould buck kent weel enough that the big lad wiz watchin him so he left wi a hopeless hop, hop.

He heard the door open ahin him then heard the scrape o a shoe landin in front o him and the door slammin again. He bent doon and picked it up and turnin back tae the hoose he made the sign o the cross.

He made his wye back tae the ditch. Pittin baith shoes on he felt in heaven and even though one shoe wiz highly polished and the ither yin jist the raw leather as it hid came fae the souter he wiz aheedin for baith wid be that clatty afore lang. So pittin a gweed fit aneth him oor ould buck wint on the road tae the isles fusslin like a linty.

Spittoon.

WARNING!

The maist disgusting joke ever. Dinna read on a full belly.

Scene - The Californian 'Gold-rush' in the 1890s.

A n Englishman, Irishman and Scotsman walked into a saloon in California. They'd just came down from the hills after six months and were sorely in need of whisky. In all that time they'd managed to get enough gold to fill a tooth so they traded it in for one shot of moonshine each and a small bag of peanuts.

The place was mobbed with miners all on a bender drinking whisky and beer like there was no tomorrow. The gambling tables were also doing a roaring trade. The lads were skint so they couldn't join in and just sat there looking on with pure envy in their hearts at the drink and dollar bills.

That was when the Englishman noticed the spittoon on the bar sitting on top of a sheet of dollar bills with a sign saying if anyone could drink half it's contents then the money was theirs.

He putted his mates, "Look lads I think I can see a way to earn ourselves a few bucks!"

With this being a saloon there was spittoons all over

and each night the owner got them emptied into one spittoon and placed on the bar. The spittoon was filled to brimming with lung phlegm and tobacco spittle. The five hundred dollars was a big draw but as yet no one had even managed a sip let alone drink half the contents.

The Englishman sidled over to the Irishman and whispered something in his ear to which he nodded vigorously They then moved towards the Scotsman.

The Irishman opened with, "Be jezuz that was a terrible thing the English done to Wallace!"

The Scotsman seemed startled at this and looked at the Irishman as he shook his head.

"Feckin terrible thing to do to the poor man!" adds the Irishman.

The Englishman pipes in, "Yeah but he was a bleeding traitor and deserved everything he got!"

The Scotsman kept looking from one to the other in disbelief as his anger mounted.

Now in this world there are insults and there are insults. To a true Scot the biggest insult on this earth is for anyone to insult William Wallace. Even to this very day the mildest mannered Scot will go into battle at even the hint of an insult to the great Wallace. But the Scot sitting there listening to this was no mild mannered man he was a huge bastard with shoulders on him like an ox.

The Irishman shook his head again, "Terrible it was!"

Then with perfect timing he looked at the Englishman and said, "I wonder now if the great Wallace could've drank the contents of that spittoon sitting there?"

The Englishman went for the kill, "Wallace was a bleeding fanny he couldn't do that! arff arff chortle chortle!"

It was the laugh that did it as the Englishman knew it would.

The Scotsman stood up knocking their table over: "YE FUCKIN THINK SO YA BASTARD?!"

This got everyone's attention in the saloon.

The Scotsman charged across the floor upsetting tables and people to the left and right and stood in front of the spittoon looking at the globular mass of lung phlegm and tobacco spittle. He was breathing heavily in his anger and he looked down at his friends as they lay on the floor looking on expectantly.

"Right, ye bastards, watch this!"

He picked up the spittoon and put it to his mouth glugg glugg and down it went. Smacking his lips he returned it to the bar-top.

Glowering at his so called friends he said, "There now ya cunts!"

The people were cheering and throwing hats in the air and some started chanting, "Wallace! Wallace! Wallace!"

This kind of calmed the big Scot down a little and indeed saved his friends from being torn limb to limb.

The Irishman and the Englishman taking the chance started to gather up the dollar bills. Even the owner seemed happy to have lost all the money. The filled spittoon had been a great draw and many men who thought they could do it drank huge quantities of hard liquor before they tried it. Until this day only one man managed a mouthful before spewing up his guts.

The mob were going wild and now everyone joined in the chant:

"Wallace! Wallace most without even knowing who Wallace was.

But it didn't matter everyone was in a party mood.

The owner looked into the spittoon and a frown came to his face.

"Hey buddy!"

This got the attention of the Scot.

"Aye?"

The owner continued, "See that sign there?"

The Scot said "Aye!"

"What does it say?" asked the owner.

The big Scot read it

"If anyone can drink half the contents of the spittoon then the money is theirs!" The Scot said, "Well I did it so the

money's mine!"

The owner shook his head.

"The sign says 'half' the contents you've drank the lot!"

"I couldn't drink just half the fuckin contents!"

The owner puzzled, "WHY?"

"Because it all came out in one fuckin lump!"

Drostan's Tears.

Part I – 6th century A.D.

Drostan arose fae his mornin devotions and closed his book o The Gospels. He'd wrote and bound it fae the original himsel many years afore at Iona and like himsel the book wiz getting the waar o the weer. The thick leather bindin wiz worn by use an some o the folds were like tae disintegrate. Een o the monks back at Deer wiz affa gweed at leatherwork so he'd get him tae look at it fin he returned fae his retreat tae the Abbey.

Drostan heard the tap, tap, tap at the windae that owerlookit the steen altar he'd jist feenished prayin at. He smiled. This wiz the mornin ritual ivvery time he came here tae his cell at Aberdour bay. The tap, tap, tappin got mair insistent so he made tae open the wee windae. As he made tae dee this he wiz always struck by how clever the Picts were, for the wee windae wisna glazed wi glaiss but wi cured fish skin scrappit till ye could near see fair throwe it.

The mornin sun cast a warm pale yell a licht intae his cell and ower the steen alter and even as important the fish skin keepit the caal breezes that were usual in this exposed place oot.

Mair tappin and Drostan, laachin tae himself, said; “Aricht ma quinie!” and opened the windae.

Standin there wiz his constant companion. A big aal craw that he caad Ruby. He'd saved her years afore fin she'd brook een o her wings an fae that day till this she'd nivver left him.

She stood there blinkin an, haaf turnin her heed, she lookit him up an doon afore jumpin in an settin hersel doon ontae the altar. Drostan's face wiz a picter an fair lichted up as he made a fuss o the big aal craw by strokin her heed an spikkin tae as if a budy.

Her wing hid healed a bitty crookit, giein her a bit stoop but she could flee for aa that. A devil's bird some o the Celtic kirk said but Drostan nivver saw crows like that and in particular nae Ruby. The Picts held the craw in great veneration and even they were impressed fin they saw him walk forth wi the craw sittin atop the Holy Cross on a pole that Drostan always cairried fin he wiz oot and aboot in the district. Though the Picts were by nae means aa Christian at this point, they themsels held Drostan in great store as a holy man and this holy man teen een o their pagan birds as his constant companion.

Ruby hoppit ower towards the lowin fire and set hersel doon at een o the binkies, mutterin awa tae hersel jist like a budy drawin in aboot tae get some heat. Drostan teen the wee bowl he keepit some scraps for her and in nae time Ruby teemed the wee bowl then settled hersel doon and

nodded aff.

Drostan smiled kindly. Ivvery mornin she wint throwe the self same routine and Ruby liftit his spirits wi her antics. Drostan himsel hid a bowl o porridge for braakfast but the last speenfae wint intae Ruby's bowlie for she likit a wee drappy porridge fin she awakened.

Drostan teen oot his wee three fittid stool an set it in front o the altar. Fae a shelf he teen doon his pen and ink pittin it tae the richt o the altar. Then fae a big leather satchel he teen oot his pride and joy. A massive tome o a beuk bound in deer skin. Inside wiz his life's work, faar he'd recorded much o his travels. Nae only that but he'd written extensively aboot the Picts, their beliefs, their wye o life, their language and a lot aboot the herbs they used tae cure illnesses.

The Picts spoke a language much like the Gaelic Drostan himsel spoke, though wi a lot o different words and pronunciations. The book also recorded a lot aboot the grasses that grew in abundance here in the lands o the Buchan.

There wiz pages and pages dedicated tae the grasses wi a lot o drawins showin their different stages o growth and notes o observations made ablow the drawins. Some hid even been coloured in but nae much o them, for Drostan much preferred the ordinary pen and ink. Some o the monks

back at the Abbey were affa gweed at makin illuminated manuscripts. But nae wye could he the Abbot let ony o them read his book because it wiz full o stuff that would be viewed as heresy especially aboot the Picts and their belief that stones were alive.

The subject o the stones fascinated Drostan and through time he'd tried tae find oot mair aboot this living stones and fit the carvins on some o them meant. He'd spoken tae a fyowe o their priests but neen were affa forthcomin and wid only tell him the carvins were tae pey homage tae their ancestors. Drostan kent there wiz much mair tae it than that but keepit gweed council and accepted fit he wiz tellt.

But his writins recorded some o his thoughts. One entry says that he noticed fae the distance how the Picts approached the symbol steens. They waalkit inabout tae the steens wi their arms folded then they'd kneel in front wi their arms still folded then say some words.

He wished he could hear fit they were sayin but the Picts wid nivver let him near enough for that so he'd jist hae tae dee wi at a distance. He did notice one thing though and that wiz the concentric rings were the maist used symbol. Different fingers o the richt haan wid be used and ran alang the grooves startin fae the ootside towards the centre as the person spoke. This wid often be repeated a fyowe times then

the person folded their airms an arose walkin backwyes for twelve paces then turnin fae the steen.

It wiz obvious tae Drostan the rings were for prayers o some kind and he observed that some fowk used different fingers. Through time and many observations that wiz the conclusion he'd come tae.

Eence he'd saw aicht men fae een o the bigger boats in the bey come tae een o the steens and there each teen a turn at kneelin and rinnin the first finger o their richt haan in the trochs o the circles while speakin tae the steen. So he concluded they might've been askin their gods for a safe return. Quite a few pages were dedicated tae the standin steens and the different symbols on them.

Drostan's cell at Aberdour stood faar the ancient kirkyard is noo on the brae on the richt o the Dour waters. At the ither side o the burn there wiz a group o standin steens aboot the place far Mess John's well is noo. That wiz the Pictish priests place and Drostan wiz nivver allowed near it because o an stupid act he'd deen as a young man. In fact that is why he preyed wi sic fervour ivvery mornin beggin forgiveness for that stupid act. Mair aboot that later.

Drostan's cell wiz a steen built building built by the monks fae the Abbey o Deer usin the saansteen that wiz abundant at Aberdour. Jist roch cut blocks thegither wi mortar made fae clay mixed wi the jellied bree fae aff o biled

seaweed that keepit the simple buildin ween an waterticht. The reef hid fower cruck trusses that gave the reef a haaf circular appearance like a Nissan hut. The reef wiz then covered by mats made fae woven grass, then covered wi divits tae keep oot the weet. The biggin wiz nineteen feet lang an ten fit braid wi side waas aboot sax fit heich an curved gaivels at twal fit. The east waa hid ae wee windae faar his alter stood an richt across fae it on the opposite waa wiz the door tae the wast.

The gaivel at the North eyne hid a simple widdin lum an the fire jist a squaar pit lined wi the hard dark blae steen fae alang the coast. Abeen the fire there wiz an bronze bar stuck oot that could be swivelled abeen the fire tae cook in his bronze pot. At the left o the fire wiz his bed made intae a box oot o saansteen lined wi dry girss for a mattress and a couple o woollen blankets for tae haap himsel.

Drostan smiled fin he mind foo the Picts were fair amazed at seein a steen built biggin for the first time. They maistly lived in roonhuts made o timmer wi cone reefs covered in divits or sometimes animal skins shewed the gither. They'd also some simple places undergrun faar they keepit milk and grain, they were line wi steen though.

The Abbey o Deer itsel wiz o timmer construction but Drostan hid plans tae rebuild it wi steen in the future. He'd even drawins o some plans in his beuk.

Drostan wiz tall and rawbeened wi a slight stoop noo that the years were beginnin tae lay their haan on his tall strong frame. His hair wiz the colour o Summer's straw wi een o cornfloer blue turnin tae purple, dependin on the licht or if he wiz tired. His face wiz pleasin tae the ee wi a short beard the same colour as his hair but a wee bitty darker.

He spoke the Gaelic wi a safter lillt tae it than the Picts used it. They hid lots o different words but found it quite easy tae understand them as they understood him. He wrote in baith the Latin and the Gaelic and wiz kent tae aa as 'Drostan the Scribe' because he nivver wint onywye athoot his satchel o writin materials hingin fae his side.

Though Abbot o Deer Drostan nivver wielded the power o sic a man wi onything but decency and tolerance, and that mair so aifter his stupid act o so many years afore. He vowed then that he'd nivver again interfere in fowk's beliefs be they Pagan or Christian.

Drostan lived a gye austere life wi little luxuries but the greatest gift that could be given him wiz sheets o parchment tae write on. In this funnily enough it wiz the Picts that keepit him supplied wi the parchment even though they themsel didnae seem tae hae much in the wye o writin apart fae carvins on steens. That wiz gye handy for Drostan because he couldna hae used the official

parchments sent doon fae Moray for tae write his beuk.

A couple o the monks back at the Abbey were Picts. Een o them in particular wiz learnin tae be a scribe and hid an amazing ability makkin illuminated manuscripts. The ither, Kenniff by name, kent so much aboot the local herbs and grasses that he'd become a particular favourite o Drostan due tae baith their interests on that subject. He vrocht in the infirmary at Deer and lookit aifter the health o the monks and ony locals that came in for treatment.

Drostan wiz soft spoken and hid nivver been heard tae raise his voice in anger.

The clyse he wore wiz as simple as they were austere. A habit wi a hood made oot o the course local wool caad hadden wi a belt o the same wuppit aroon the middle. The locals dyed their wool in different colours but aa monks wore habits o the natural colour. On his feet wiz the Pictish type shoes that came up weel ower the ankles made o deer skin wi a thicker ox leather for soles. In the Buchan a budy needed that for the climate that wiz maistly caal an weet.

Fin he wint abroad on affairs o office, his uncle Columbic's bell wis cairriet tae his front by een o the monks on a pole so that at each step it rang oot tae let the fowk ken the Abbot wiz aboot his Christian business and could be approached for blessings. Passin throwe the various settlements Drostan would be asked for coontless blessings

even though maist o the population were as yet Pagan in their beliefs. Drostan himsel wiz once a Pagan till converted tae Christianity as a bairn by his uncle Columba, so he understood a fair bit aboot them. Also wi him haein his big aal craw Ruby sittin aheed o the cross he cairriet wint a lang wye in crossin the divide.

Fowk wid gither roon him many askin tae touch his hair for they'd nivver seen onybody wi hair that licht. Drostan allowed them tae dee that even though it wiz a distinctly Pagan custon in so deein. It wiz common tae the Picts in the Buchan faa believed if you touched the hair you were in touch wi the dream o the before an aifter times. And wi Drostan bein so licht coloured getting leave tae handle his hair wiz lookit on as a particlary good omen or blessing.

He'd tour the four Holy healing waals that lay within the policies o the kirk and there hud wee stations and prayers. He did the same wi the one lochan at Pitfoor owerlookin the the Abbey o Deer. Lastly he'd gyang on his ain tae the standin steens at Aikey and there he'd perform devotions while waakin on his knees roon each steen gyan as the sun's course beggin forgiveness fae God and the Pagan Gods for his stupid act o so many years afore. He'd feenish by sittin atap the big recumbent steen, wi the tears o misery and shame rinnin doon his chiks unheeded.

It hid aa started fin he'd been made the Abbot o Deer

by his uncle Columba faa hid tellt him tae rule wisely and wi prudence in dealing wi his abbey and the local peoples.

Drostan, being young, nodded in agreement without really understandin fit wise words his uncle hid jist imparted tae him. Columba teen his leave o Drostan doon at the shore o Aberdour and legend tells us that Drostan cast tears at this farewell and faar his tears touched the grun bonny clear water began tae bubble up fae that spot. Now Drostan noted this in his beuk merely as nonsense for the well wiz already there as it hid been for many many years and used by the Picts at Aberdour as a Pagan Holy waal.

Drostan indeed did cast tears on Columba's leavin tae gyang back tae Iona and Columba in one last act on his farewell put his blessings on the waal and embraced Drostan for baith kent they'd nivver meet again. Columba wi a sad hert climbed aboord the vessel that wiz tae tak him tae Iona and stood at the stern wavin tae Drostan till the vessel wint oot o sight roon the heedland o Fiddes. Drostan hid stood for a lang time lookin oot at the sea, his hert feelin like a lump o lead and his stamaach churnin. He knelt and gave a prayer for his uncle's safe journey and askit o God tae gee him the wisdom tae be a decent and fair Abbot.

For the first fyowe years athing hid wint well and the Picts though distrustful o the strangers in their midst at first began tae accept their presence. It wiz Drostan that hid

much tae dee wi this change by his gan oot amongst the people nae as a Christian wieldin a rod o iron as some did in ither places but merely as a man interested in them and their wyes. The lands o Deer hid been granted tae the Celtic church by een o the Monemaer's that ruled ower part o the Buchan aifter Columba and Drostan hid prayed for the Monemaer's favourite son that lay near tae death. The laddie hid made a full recovery so in thanks Columba and Drostan were given the lands o Deer for as lang as 'green girss grew an clear waater ran.'

Noo within the policies o the kirk lay the steen circle spoken o earlier. Fin Drostan started tae dee his rounds as the Abbot he got tae hear aboot the holy rowan tree that grew in the centre o the steen circle and aboot it's magic healing powers. He'd been tellt by een o the Pictish priests that the tree grew health gegin roddens in great abundance for sax years then on the seventh year it grew barren o berries but in that year it grew big pods the size o a man's heed intae the cruick o the tree. An fae this pods wee man bodys aboot twa fit heich hatched oot like an egg. The priest caad them limpachs and this wee fowk attended the tree and steens ivvery need and made a wine fae the roddens collected and dried by the priests fae the sax years afore.

Noo accordin tae legend the medicine fae the roddens cured maist athing that could deeve a body. The Pagan

priests handed oot a beaker o this wine ilka mornin tae them as needed.

Noo Drostan for some reason teen a set against this tree and because the tree wiz on the gruns o the kirk, he ordered it felled. This created a gye stramash amongst the fowk an they even tried tae get their Monemaer involved tae stop him. But as the lands hid been given tae the kirk for as lang as green girss grew an clear waaters ran nithing could be deen tae save the tree.

Twa widmen were called and they reluctantly set tae work but only as far as the first swing o the aix. The tree screamed fae it in anger and pain. Leastwyes that's fit they said as they ran awa. Drostan staanin there hid heard nithing o the kind. The result o aa this ongyans wiz that the widmen refused an wid hae nithing mair tae dee wi it.

Eventually Drostan got twa monks that were widmen doon fae the Abbey at Clova tae fell the tree. The local fowk were affa angry at losin their Holy tree and it teen many months afore things settled doon. Drostan hid been on his high horsie aa the while even ignorin the words fae Columba: 'Tae rule wisely an wi prudence'. Columba's words were tae come back and haunt Drostan thus settin the course for a lifetime o shame.

It come aboot this wye. The very next year a plague o sorts hut the district an laid its caal haan o death across the

fowk. At first there wiz as muckle wine in storage tae cure the first infections but as it spread the wine seen ran oot, an aifter that many fowk deet o the plague. Drostan, at last realisin his mistake, tried tae mak amends by gan in amongst the ill and sayin prayers for them. Aa his prayers proved useless and he stood lookin on helplessly as men, weemin and bairns deet in their droves. He even asked God tae infect him as a punishment for fit he in his stupidity hid deen tae the peer fowk. But God it seemed hid ither plans for Drostan. A life time o shame wiz tae be his lot poor man.

Fae that day on, ivvery mornin at the dawnin he preyed for forgivneness and for the souls o them he'd sentenced tae death by cuttin doon their Holy tree. This stupid senseless act though made Drostan een o the best Abbots in the whole o Pictland. Ivver aifter he nivver wid interfere in people's beliefs be they Pagan or Christian. If they wanted tae convert tae Christianity he wid help them, if no he left them tae believe as they wanted. But he'd help abody tae mak their lives worth the livin and treated all wi decency and tolerance.

As the years passed, Drostan wrote as much as he could intae his big tome o a beuk. The only ither person that hid ivver yet read some o it wiz Kenniff the Pictish monk. Kenniff hid become a life lang freen o Drostan's and a pact hid been made atween the twa o them that on Drostan's

death he Kenniff wiz tae tak the beuk up tae the Abbot o Clova for safe keeping.

Drostan deet at the cell at Aberdour aboot the year 602 AD in his fifty seventh year. Kenniff hid been in attendance at his last illness and hid tried aa the herbs he could tae save him but tae nae avaul. Fin Kenniff entered the cell in the mornin Drostan lay in his bed as if still asleep. Kenniff kent he wiz gone because his big craw lay across his chest in the same state as her maister wi her wings spread and her heed restin ablow Drostan's chin as if she'd been tryin tae gee him bosies.

Kenniff owerseen his beerial under the fleer o the cell and seen tae it that Ruby wiz placed aside him.

A church wid later be built on that spot and bits o it still staans at Aberdour tae this very day.

Kenniff left the Abbey o Deer and made his wye tae the Abbey at Clova cairryin Drostan's beuk. On it he'd carved on the leather cover 'Drostan's Tears' but Kenniff and the beuk nivver reached Clova and nae sicht norr soon o Kenniff wiz ivver tae be heard or seen upon this earth again.

Now! Ye'll be winnderin why a semi-literate man likes o me kens so muckle aboot Drostan fin the scholars ken virtually nithing aboot him ava apart fae wee bitties in different writings aboot ither Saints.

Drostan wiz canonised lang, lang aifter his death and apart fae some fragments aboot him nithing now remains. That apart fae on his beerial three locks o his hair wiz teen only one o which is sill known tae be in existence and great cures hiv been attributed tae it. It's me that his tae tak up the next story aboot Drostan fourteen centuries aifter his time.

Now here's how it wiz that I ken so muckle.

In the year nineteen sixt aicht I got a job vrochtin at Gillespie Hoose and a richt placie it wiz. But fitivver, it'll mak yer very bleed rin caal an the hairs on the back o yer neck birss up like a cat's and rob ye o sleep for wikks if nae months tae come. If ye dare, ye'd best read Saint Drostan's Tears Part II: Gillespie Hoose.

Drostan's Tears

Part II - Gillespie Hoose 1968 A.D.

I stood in the early mornin freest awytin the arrival o the solicitor wi the key for the big wrought iron gate. My work's van wiz tucked in at the left o the big gate and I could see the hoose set well back intae the grounds. It lookit fae here tae be biggit o saansteen. It wiz een o yon Victorian biggins made tae look like a seventeenth century masion but only a third o the size. It wiz a twa storied building wi a big covered entrance held up wi three huge pillars in the centre front. On the richt o the entrance there wiz a big bey windae that wint up twa stories, on the left were twa flush casement windaes een abeen the ither. I coulda be sure fae the distance but een or twa peens o glaiss lookit broken. The gravel drive tae the hoose wiz weel owergrown wi weeds comin up throwe the chuckies. Through the trees at the left o the drive I could jist mak oot the reef o another building. I teen that tae be a stable, maist likely.

As I waited, I wint ower in my mind the reason I wiz staanin here waitin. I wiz a pinter tae the trade but ae time a couple o years afore work hid been gye scarce. At that time the Government hid teen oot a scheme for trainin up six month tradesmen so I'd managed tae get masel ontae the jinery course. It wiz better than signin ontae the dole an stagnatin through the winter. They taught ye the basics o the trade only. Mair or less jist the roughin work like framin oot the intimmers o biggins an sic like.

A lot o time served lads werena ower happy aboot it though

an gave a lot o the sax monthers a gye hard time o't. But I wiz aaricht wi my bein a pinter tae the trade. Onywyne I'd vrocht on plenty o the same sites and kent a lot o the lads fine. I actually enjoyed deein the roughin jinery and the bonus wiz it gave me the chance tae get awa fae the smell o pint for a fylie.

Then comes the reason I'm staanin wytin at the gates o a big hoose. I'd been vrochtin deein the roughin work ae time in a new bungalow fin this toff kindo lad comes in. He jist steed lookin aboot for a while and my thinkin he wiz probably an architect or some sic like jist let him get on wi it. A fyle later he came inaboot an speired if I'd be interested in deein a homer? Well my bein but a sax monther I usually pit onybody needin a job deen ontae some o the real jiners unless it wiz a simple job like pittin up a fence or something the likes o that. So I tellt him there wisna ony jiners on the site that day but if he gave me his number I'd see if ony o the lads could help. He lookit puzzled fin I said that and pynted tae the haimmer in my haan sayin he thocht I wiz a jiner?

I tellt him the oots an ins and he wiz affa interested in this speirin me aboot the roughin jinery and seemed trickit wi my bein a pinter ana. Onywyne it ends up he wiz seekin somebody tae expose some jeest eynes intae an aal hoose tae check for ony rot. A customer o his wiz needin tae buy the hoose but wanted it checked oot aforehaan. I wiz reluctant, thinkin tae masel that this wiz a job for a real jiner nae a sax monther the likes o me. The toff lad seemed adamant that he wanted me, so that nicht aifter work I wint an hid a look. I tellt him though that if it wiz ower complicated I'd nae be deein it and he'd need a time served lad in. This suited him fine so

we'd arranged tae meet at the hoose.

In the event the job wiz richt straacht forritt, so I did as he asked and exposed the suspect jeest eynes. The gweed news wiz that athing wiz perfect an there wisna one pick o rot aboot the place. Aifster I'd feenished and pittin my tools intae the van he come inaboot fair chuffed lookin. He teen oot his wallet and handed me a twenty pound note.

On seein this I said, "Oh no no min that's faar ower muckle!"

The look o surprise that crossed his face wiz a picter.

I thocht maybe I'd embarrassed him so I quickly said, "I'll tak a fiver if ye want tae gee ma that."

Well he recovered fae his surprise but wid hear nae sic thing aboot a fiver and shoved the twenty intae ma dungaree pouch sayin it wiz well worth it tae him getting the job done at such short notice!

It wiz my turn tae feel embarrassed noo because twenty pounds wiz mair than I earned in a week. He then handed me his business card. He owned his ain firm o solicitors and if it wiz aaricht wi me he'd pit me on his books as the firm's catch hand kindo lad.

Ower the next couple o years I'd got a lot o work throwe his firm fae changin locks tae emergency repairs on buildings he owned and quite a lot o pintin jobbies for baith him and his customers. I'd started on my own aifster that, as a handyman and michty plenty jobs did I get. But the jobs I got fae him ayee peyed weel.

He eence tellt ma it wiz my complete honesty that hid struck him and laughingly spoke aboot the cairry on wi the twenty pound note. He said nae muckle fowk he kent wid've refused that. But

fitivver the case here wiz I wytin tae gyan and dee a cracker o a job.

I could hear a car comin alang the narra road but I couldna see it for the hedges that lined ilka side o the road until the funky BMW came intae view and pulled intae the gateway. I could see it wiz een o the young solicitors fae the heed office. He smiled and gid me a wave fin he saw me as he hurridly jumped oot o the car. He'd nae jaicket on. He wiz weerin a fite sark wi tie, so the caal ween hut him fair an bye and in second he wiz shiverin. He'd thin breeks on and a pair o Italian shoes that lookit for aa the world like cardboord wi some blaik on them for a shine. Nae exactly the type o riggoot a budy maun weer in sic a caal barefaced morning.

He lookit ower ma shooder at the hoose and I saw a fleetin swype o fear cross his face. He'd been here afore makkin oot the list o jobs nottin deen so I winnert why he lookit so feart. He leaned back intae the car takin oot a big folder. He said the job schedule and order numbers were aa in order then he handed ma a huge bunch o keys.

I speired at him if he wiz comin tae show ma the jobs but he jist nervously pynted tae the folder sayin athing's in there. I saw a look o horror cross his face at my suggestion. A look at his watch then wi a quick, "Affa busy! Must be getting on!"

Anither short look at the hoose, then hurriedly back inower his car. Wi a quick wave he fired up the engine spun the wheels a bit an wint off doon the road as if Aal Leather tail himsel wiz nippin at his heels. I stood there a minty lookin at the hoose tae see fit fleggit him so muckle. But bugger a thing could I see.

I'd a fair Chavez wi the padlock on the big gate for the key wisna among the bunch o keys he'd geen ma. So I'd nithing adee but

tae cut the chyne that keepit baith haafs o the gate secure. Ach well, I'd jist hiv tae get a new lock fin I wint tae the buildin suppliers in the toon.

The drive wiz aboot a hunner yards lang, wi a turnin circle near the hoose like a roundabout. The centre o it wiz full o overgrown bushes and the drive wisna muckle better wi aa the weeds growin thowe the chuckies. Thankfully it widna be my job tae sort that mess oot.

It wiz a richt bonny buildin wi a big covered entrance faar a coach could drive under allowin the fowk tae enter the hoose oot o the elements. The covered entrance wiz held up by three huge ornate pillars and hid a plain flat roof. The rest o facade wiz completely plain, nae carvins or date steen tae be seen. Tae my taste this added tae its beauty because so much saansteen biggins o this kind were destroyed by the builders owerdeelin it wi ornamentation.

The door wiz made oot o oak and must've weighed haaf a ton. It wiz plain as could be, wi three panels on each haaf an lookit as if it hid jist been varnished weeks ago and nae the years it must've been. The lock though wiz a fair Chavez tae wun open. Eventually it turned and I gave it a shove. Mighty though the hinges protested as I shoved it open. They'd nocht a liberal dose o WD40 or Wully Donald as we caad it. I'd hiv tae dee that tae aa the hinges an locks aboot the place so's nae tae braak them.

Inside, there wiz a second door. It wiz glaized wi stained glaiss and in the centre there wiz some kind o coat o arms deen wi the same glaiss. Beyond it I entered a big haal wi a saansteen stair case on the left gyan up tae the next level. The hall wiz plain and apart fae

a big ornamental cornice gyan roon the ceilin and a massive plaster centre piece wi a chandelier and globes in it, the place wiz pretty unremarkable. Nae a lot o licht came in apart fae a big windae at the back waa aside the stairs. But maist o it wiz deen wi stained glaiss and that teen awa much o the licht. At the bottom o the stairs on my richt there wiz a big bonny panelled door an tae my left on the opposite waa wiz twa mair.

The rooms themsels were jist big boxes, the only ornamentation wiz the cornices and ceilin centres o the maist basic style and the widwork wiz the same, wi aichteen inch varnished skirtins an fite pintaed windaes. The waas were pintaed wi primrose eggshell pint, a colour that actually suited the rooms. The pint though wiz peelin here an there and the varnish on the skirtins were aa kill cracked and perished wi time. I could see a puckle bits faar water hid gotten in, particularly ablow the windaes.

Only one room doonstairs could be caad a bit mair interestin. It let in fae ablow the stairs and obviously hid eence been the library. Very few shelves were left but ye could see on the waas faar they'd been. In this room the fireplace wiz made o cast iron wi bonny tiles done in hunting scenes set in the surrounds o the fire. The rest o the fireplaces I'd seen were made o plain saansteen that were cracked an reekit wi years o use.

Up the heed o the stairs ye struck a left alang a dull lichted lobby that let intae the the sax bedrooms. They were much smaller than the doonstair rooms and very plain, even plainer if that were possible. The waas again were o primrose yella eggshell pint. The rooms were hingin wi spider's wobbs and flakin pint and the timmer

fleers were covered in styowe. But upstairs there wiz little evidence o water comin in so the reef itsel must've been in gweed enough nick. That's always a plus in an aal buildin like this. Actually I wiz a bittie disappointed wi the inside really, for it could've been so much mair. But ach, I wisna here tae judge but tae get on wi the vrocht.

The best bit for me wiz fit hid been the servant's quarters in the attic. They were cosy wi licht grey pintaed timmer linings. Richt bonny wee rooms that were as functional as they were practical.

There wiz an annex on the left haan side o the main hoose that I'd nae noticed fae the road. This wiz the kitchen and the first thing ye saw on enterin wiz the massive cookin range anent the back waa. It wiz in a dire condition pure hingin wi corrosion. There wiz a wee room aff the main kitchen wi twa big sinks sittin alloe fower wee windaes and the waas were decked oot in marble shelves. At the back waa an aal farrent stove for heatin water. This must've been the scullery. The fleer wiz decked oot in sclate flagsteens like the kitchen and I saw there wiz a door tae the ootside at the side o the sinks. I thocht tae mak this the place tae store my tools and ony ither materials I'd be getting for the job.

I read the schedule the young solicitor hid given ma. There wiz a wee bit o history aboot the building. Seemingly it hid been built on the site o a twelfth century castle in the mid nineteenth century by a 'hen-trippin-ower' kindo lad faa'd decided tae bigg himsel a mansion. In the event the siller hid run oot. I thocht tae masel that must be the reason for the austre intimmers o the hoose. The big hoose hid remained in the faimily but it wiz nivver tae be the place it'd been intended tae be. The faimily still owned it but bade oot in

Sweden and hid decided tae mak it intae a holiday home.

The schedule gave me a rindooin on fit I'd tae dee but it wiz gye sketchy tae say the least. Minin on the young solicitor's face as he'd lookit at the hoose and the pure fear in it then nae much winder there wiz sic a dearth o information in the schedule. But I kent weel enough fit wid be noottin deen so that wisna a problem. The pey wiz gweed at three pounds by the oor. If I'd been vrochtin on a site I'd be lucky tae be getting ten or twelve bob an oor. On tap o that I wiz tae be given fifty pounds a week for my digs, a bliddy fortune back in the sixties I can tell ye. I'd nae intention tae get digs but wid bide in the hoose for the sax wikks I'd been given tae dee the job.

I spent the rest o the day getting the scullery ready for my occupation. First my tools teen in and pitten on the shelves. There wisna ony electric in the hoose but that wisna a problem as I'd be workin the haan mull tools onywye. I put my camp bed aside the stove and teen in my primus for cookin an makkin tay. As it wiz still gye caal I spent some time ficherin wi the scullery stove and found it tae be in nae ower bad o a condition. Nithing like as bad as the kitchen yin onywye. I checked oot the lum tae see if it wiz clear o birds nests or rubble but it wiz clear. Next I wint on the raik for bitties o sticks fae alloe the trees. A fyowe oxterfaes o that and in nae time I'd the stove lowin. Kettle on and soon I'd a fine brew on the go.

For licht I'd ma Tilley paraffin storm lantern. It gid aff a gweed enough light seein it wiz pressurised, but for mair general use I'd a basic wikk lantern. Basic I'd say, but gweed enough for me at that time. Onywye I planned tae get masel a wee petrol generator lighting set aifter I wiz peyed for this job. That wid mak a gye odds

workin in places like this faar there wisna ony sparks and as a bonus I'd get tae use my electric tools instead o the haan mull like I'd be deein here.

That nicht I settled doon cosy pie on the camp bed inside ma sleepin pyoke. The stove wiz weel loaded wi sticks so I jist lay watchin the flickers comin fae the vents and thinkin aboot the job.

I must've drifted aff but awoke wi a start. For a minty I windered faar I wiz. The bricht meenlicht wiz comin in throwe the windaes castin its caal eerie glow aboot the room. Thinkin that's fit must hae wakened ma I turned awa fae it and settled doon. Seconds later I heard a door bangin inside the hoose and wiz sure I heard voices. Another bang then silence as if faaivver they were hid wint intae a room closin the door ahin them.

I lay and listened for ony ither sounds but apart fae the normal creaks an groans ye get fae empty hooses there wiz nithing. I feltt a wee bittie spookit at this but I kent fine there must be a mair rational explanation than the thocht o ghosts. Then I mind on the look o fear on the young solicitor's face fin I'd suggested he come in an show ma fit tae dee. I snuggled doon intae my sleepin pyoke wi that, I'm tellin ye.

I awoke early jist as the licht wiz comin throwe the windaes. I feltt surprisingly fresh even aifter my near bein fleggit haaf tae death in the early oors. Wi the daylight came the reasonin and I put it doon tae masel dreamin and comin haaf awake. Well that's fit I convinced masel wi.

A blackie wiz singin its hert oot in the trees aside the scullery, so I lay listenin tae it for a while afore getting up and firin

up my primus for a cuppy o tay. The stove hid wint oot durin the nicht so I shivered as I fichered wi ma tay things. That day I planned tae gyang intae the toon for some things I be noottin for the job and also I'd need mait an something tae cairry drinkin water.

I'd heen a look at the water supply yestreen and found it came fae a waal but athing wiz choked up so I'd nae be getting ony drinkin water fae there. The hoose water hid come fae the waal by a pump but the pump wiz jist a bag o roost. In the whole hoose there wiz but three lavies, fower sinks and one bathroom and aa run in wi lead pipes so I couldna hae got water supposin the wall and pump were in perfect workin order. Aal lead pipes were notorious for leakin if they'd be aff for ony length o time, nivver mind the fower decades since the twenties like here.

I set off for the toon and set up an accoont at the building suppliers under the name o the solicitors and placed my first order. Next I wint tae the shop for eerins tae masel. Nithing grand jist tay, sugar, dried milk, tins o bullybeef, spam, beans, peys, cheese, oatcakes and packets o pom (dried tatties). Maybe nae the best o mait for noo-a-days healthy fowke but by God it wiz tasty aa the same. Jist fit a man body needs tae get on wi the vrocht. My next stop wiz the ironmongers for twa five gallon plastic containers for water and a couple o gallons o paraffin for my lamps. There wiz a coonty yard near haan and I got my water containers fulled there nae bother.

In gweed fettle I made my wye back tae the hoose and fin I turned intae the drive I could've swore I saw movement in een o the windaes abeen the entrance. I thocht tae masel that some bugger maun be bidin in the hoose and mindin on the door slammin in the

middle o the nicht, that must be exactly fit it wiz. Bugger!

Hurridly I let masel in throwe the scullery door and made for the hall. As I entered I could've swore the place wiz full o fowk aa mutterin awa. I physically didna hear onything barr a pressure in my lugs but the hall wiz fulled wi a brooding atmosphere and an evil presence.

The hall wiz a gloomy place onywye so that could've been fit gave me that feelings but fitivver it wiz it fairly stoppit ma in my tracks for a fyowe seconds afore I spoke oot loud;

“Awa min, yer lettin yersel get spookit like a bairn!”

I made for the stairs and jist as I reached the bottom o them a door banged abeen ma, so I ran up the stairs tae catch faavver wiz up there playin silly buggers. Eence I got tae the heed o the stairs I stoppit and hid a quick look aboot ma. I wiz jist awa tae move eence mair fin I noticed the fleer. It wiz covered in the styowe o decades and the only fitprints I saw were my ain yins fae the day afore. Jist tae prove something tae masel I wint back doon the stairs and aboot haafwyes I saw ither fitprints that must've been the young solicitor's. I could even see faar he'd turned an made his wye back doon. Fit hid fleggit him? Hid he heard a door bang and hightailed it fae the place? Or hid he felt the atmosphere or heard mutterin?

A bit troubled and mair than a bitty scared I made my wye back up tae hae a check in the rooms even as far up as the servant's quarters in the attic. But nae a thing did I find and apart fae my ain fitprints in the styowe o decades I could see that nae ither person hid walked there. Gye thochtfull and mair than a bittie spookit I made my wye doon tae the scullery.

I unloaded my eerins and water then decided tae hae something tae ait. I wiz bliddy ravenous for I'd nae hin a bite since braakfast the day afore. I feltt much better aifter some oatcakes and cheese wi a fine cuppy o tay. I put aa the strange ongyans doon tae a vivid imagination I nivver even kent I hid afore. Geein masel a bit o a shak I jist lookit tae the front and held gyan wi my work. This pullin masel up tae point fairly workit awa for a wee whilie but I started tae feel I wiz bein watched and ivvery noo an then I'd catch a movement at the tail o ma ee. Eence or twice I'd turn ma heed fast but there wiz nivver onything there.

Fin I did that I'd shout oot loud tae masel; "Awa min an stop this bliddy silly cairryon!"

The words felt as if they came back tae mock ma but jist as a pressure ye'll understand. In this wye I got throwe the first week. There'd been nae mair doors bangin nor mutterin and my sleep hid been completely undisturbed. But the feelins o bein watched were aye there. I settled doon fine and wiz fair getting on wi the vrocht.

Ilka nicht I'd hae a wanner aboot the gruns. There wiz fit hid been a vast formal gairden but aa growed ower wi weeds noo but michty it must've lookit gweed back in the day. There wiz a cracker o a kitchen gairden wi brick waas aa roon aboot fifteen fit heich. The hinges on the entrance door were seized solid an nae maitter foo muckle WD40 I applied they widna move but I got in throwe the north side faar a bit o the waa that hid fell in at some point.

A big greenhoose wiz at the far eyne; a lot o the glaiss wiz broken in it and the whole structure wiz in a gye unsafe condition so I didna venture in there. Fit hid been the kitchen gairden wiz jist a mass

o weeds and gnarled bushes and apart fae that there wisna an affa lot tae see. But mighty it wiz fine an warm and I could see plenty fruit trees against the sooth facin waa. I'd love tae see this place in the growin season.

At the ither side o the kitchen gairden I came across fit hid been the stables. It wiz a richt weel set up wee buildin biggit wi the same saansteen as the big hoose. It hid twa stories tae it. Doon ablow wiz the staas for a puckle horses and abeen that must've been faar the stable haan hid bade. Up there water hid gotten in an rotted a lot o the fleer so I only got a peek in nae wantin tae faa throwe the fleer. It lookit tae me as if somebody hid dossed in there for I could see a wee shackydoon o course woollen blankets and a dish aside it wi fit looked like tabbies in it. But that must've been an affa lot o years ago for aathing wiz covered in a thick lair o dust. I wun carefully doon the stairs watchin faar I put ma feet.

Oot in the licht eence mair I made my wye doon tae faar I did my ablutions. I'd found this place fin I'd geen on the raike for fresh water. There wiz a sheltered pool that must've been a water feature for the main gairden, though noo it wiz full o waterlillys and reeds. The bit that fed the pool wiz a bonny clear wee burn, so I'd come doon here ilka forenicht for tae sweel the styowe fae aff masel. The water wiz freezin but it washed awa the swyte o the day an invigorated a budy nae handy.

Ae forenicht I wiz sittin on the doorstep o the scullery haein a bit supper and enjoyin the last o the sun's rays, fin I noticed an aal craw sittin in een o the trees opposite tae faar I sat. It seemed tae be affa interested in fit I wiz deein by turnin its heed an lookin me up an

doon. I threw some crummles o oatcake oot ontae the chuckies and the craw half flew doon tae them. I could see it hid a crookit wing and thocht tae masel it must've brook it at ae time peer wee craiter.

I said till it, "Aye aye crawsie!"

It keekit up at ma fin I said that and for a minty lookit ma up an doon then cairried on aitin the crummles. This wiz a starter for ten, an afore the wikk wiz oot the big aal craw wiz feedin fae ma haan. Michty, but it wiz affa fond o the spam an fyles managed a haaf tinny. Afore lang it wid come intae the scullery an flee up tae the shelf abeen the stove an gyang tae sleep for maist o the day. Fin it awoke it wid land aside ma, pesterin ma for another morsel or twa.

Michty, I wiz fair trickit wi this craw an noo an then I'd even get tae claw its heed. I caad it Jock-in-the-mooth and it fairly answered tae that and wid come doon fae the tree but I'd later find oot 'he' wiz a 'she', though mair on that later.

As usual, I bankit up the stove wi a puckle sticks an snuggled intae ma sleepin pyoke cosey pie. Hardly did I close ma een but I wiz oot fae the coont. I'd nae need tae set my alarm for at sunrise Jock-in-the-mooth wid be tap, tap, tappin on the scullery windae lookin tae wun in for a morsel an then a sleep abeen the stove. This hid fairly become a mornin ritual.

That nicht though wiz fin the strange dreams started. I'd find masel intae a chamber aboot twinty fit by ten fit. It wiz biggit wi roch steen and a coomed ceiling. The only licht wiz a big rosety stick stuck intae an iron hoop against een o the waas. In my dream I could actually smell the roset.

*

Slowly I'd become aware o a presence aboot ma as if I wiz being watched. Bit by bit fower monks came intae view mutterin awa tae eenanither. They showed nae interest in me though, but seemed tae lookin past ma. I turned, and that wiz fin I saw a naked man tied tae a frame. Oh me, he lookit gye sair made and I could mak oot lots o wounds coverin maist o his body. I tried tae gyang towards him but nae a muscle could I move barr my heed.

On the poor man's face I could see sic despair as I nivver in aa ma life afore hid yet seen. But the look o despair changed tae pure horror. I turned ma heed and saw een o the fower monks place a sharpened stake intae a hole in the grun. Although I couldna see their faces I heard the strange words as they started chanting.

This galvanised the man tied tae the frame tae attempt tae braak free. As he struggled I saw the shackles roon his wrists cut intae his flesh as he thrashed aboot.

Three o the monks teen him doon fae the frame and led him tae the sharpened stake. Mighty me, the peer man struggled against them wi aa his might but tae nae avaul. They held the still strugglin figure abeen the stake and seemed tae be askin him questions. He shook his heed vigorously jist makkin a low keenin sound.

The fourth monk standin by, nodded his heed tae the ither three and they slowly lowered the now screamin man ontae the stake.

I tried my best tae move but I really wiz fixed and couldna move ava, so I roared oot o ma for them tae stop in the name o God!

This got the attention o the monks and that's fin I saw their faces fae alloe the hoods. And supposin I live tae be a hunnder years aal I nivver want tae see sic evil faces again. It wiz my turn tae

scream and I gye near burst ma very thrappel as I stood there screamin oot o ma. I wiz shakkin and freezin ma hert wiz near burstin its wye throwe ma very breest.

*

I found masel oot o ma sleeping bag lookin oot the windae o the scullery in a state nae handy. Relief swept ower ma fin I realised it wiz only a bad dream but Christ it hid felt real enough. Shakkin like a leaf and covered in swyte I wint back intae my sleepin bag and lay awake for the rest o the nicht til Jock-in-the-mooth started tae tap on the windae.

I wiz pretty unsettled for the rest o the day and ayee fellt tae look ower ma shooder but aifter ma dream I'd nae be deein that jist in case I lookit intae the evil faces again.

Onywyne I vrocht awa but I jist couldna get the image o that poor man's face oot o ma heed ava. My big aal craw seemed tae hiv changed his habit and instead o gan tae sleep as usual aifter his morsels he follyt ma aboot as if reluctant tae let ma fae his sicht. I wiz so upset that I thocht tae gyang intae the toon for digs and only vrocht here in the oors o daylight. I fairly considerd deein that and wid've if Jock hidna wint oot wi a caw. Then I thocht tae masel fit wid he dee for a wee morsel. Silly though it may sound I wint against ivvery alarm bell ringin in ma heed tellin ma tae get awa fae this place ower the heeds o an aal craw nae getting a tasty morsel.

I'd the same dream a couple mair times ower the space o a wikk, always wi the same result o me stannin oot o my sleeping bag screamin oot o ma. I thocht that I must be gyan aff the gourd.

As I said, the dream wiz the same wi the selfsame results but

there wiz ae subtle change. As the monks manifested themsels instead o lookin past me at the man on the frame they first focused on me and boy, did I feel the evil come aff them at this point. I wiz rael sparkit up aboot this but aiterhin I wiz left in peace as they fixed their attentions tae the poor terrifeart man chyned tae the torture frame.

It wid've been the beginnin o my third week there, jist aifter I fitted the security wire on the doonstairs windaes, that I saw the fower monks stannin doon aside the kitchen gairden lookin up at ma.

The very hairs on the back o ma neck birrsed up because even fae this distance I felt the menace.

Then a strange thing happened.

My aal craw appeared fae naewye and started tae swoop them. They were neen too happy aboot this and behaved if they were terrifeart o him, coorien doon an wavin their airms aboot. Slowly they wint fae sicht and the feeling o menace wint wi them.

That nicht I'd the re-occurring dream again. It wiz the same dream but this time the fower monks focussed on me as they teen the poor man doon fae the frame. They hissed strange words at ma and their breaths smelled like that fae a rotten sewer. I started screamin as they made a grab for me and dragged me towards the sharpened stake on the fleer.

*

The next I kent my aal craw wiz there beatin them wi his wings. I wiz still screamin fin I found masel leanin ower the big double sink in the scullery gaspin for breath and greetin like a bairn.

I managed tae calm masel doon a bit, but michty I wiz breathin hard, as if I'd been hill run. Instead o gan back tae ma bed, I

made masel a cuppy o fine sweet tay and lichted my we paraffin lamp for it wiz still gye dark. I heard a gentle tap tappin at the windae and saw it wiz my aal craw so I let him in. Michty but it seemed wrocht up, an hopped aboot wi its queer broken wing loup afore comin up ontae ma knee. I petted him for a while as he sat mutterin awa tae himsel and my askin him as if a budy fit wye he wiz oot and it still pickmirk ootside. He widna leave me so I put him up in his favourite place abeen the fire.

By this time I wiz beginnin tae feel mair relaxed and aifter dichtin aff maist o the swyte fae masel, I climbed back intae my sleepin pyoke. I turned the paraffin lampy doon low an tried tae wun back tae sleep. I must've dozed a bit but I awoke wi a loup as a door slammed in the hoose, then anither, then anither. Na, na I wisna haein this ava. I wiz eether gyan aff the heed or the bliddy hoose wiz haunted by evil spirits.

I put on ma clyse beets ana and fired up my Tilly storm lamp. It gave aff a gye bricht licht so I thocht I'd settle this oot one wye or the tither.

By the time I wun intae the hall I could've sworne the place wiz crowded oot wi fowk. Ivvery door wiz slammin een at a time startin fae the tap o the buildin richt doon here tae the hall then gyan fae the hall richt back up tae the tap o the hoose. Ower and ower this happened but nae one bliddy thing could I see bricht Tilley lamp or no.

I wiz scared aaricht, that I can tell ye but nae as scared as fin invisible haans started tae tug at my clyes and stroke ma face. Aa the while the doors were bangin bangin throughoot the hoose. I almost

did tak tae ma heels then but anger started tae replace my fear. Then burnin shame on me, for I believed in nithing at that time, but I roared oot shakkin ma fist intae the air;

“In the name o God and aa the saints in heaven wid ye stop!!”

Silence!

Nae one mair sound. Nithing! It jist stopped like that. The atmosphere wiz still ‘full’ though. As if a crowd o fowk awaited the next bit. Then slowly even that changed and I could’ve swore I heard the licht scuffle o feet on the treads o the big saansteen stairs. By this time I wiz nearly on the point o collapse and, almost in a daze, I made my wye back throwe tae the scullery and lay oot on my bed.

*

Bricht sunlight awakened ma, alang wi the tap tappin o Jock-in-the-mooth at the windae.

Bleary eyed I got up an let him in sayin, “How did you get oot?”

I distinctly remembered him comin in in the middle o the nicht then my pittin him up tae his favourite place.

Oot loud I said, “This is it I’m gan pure aff the crump!”

I’d my breakfast, makkin sure the aal craw got his share ana. He wint tae his favourite place an wiz soon asleep. I cairried on wi the work. Another fyowe days and that wid be me feenished weel aheid o schedule. I’d nae be sorry tae see the back o this brooding place. I’d hae a word wi the young solicitor aboot it and hear the reason why he bolted.

Onywyne I stuck it oot athoot ower muckle bother. I’d nae

mair dreams and for that I wiz gye thankful. The only soor note wiz my haein tae leave my aal craw ahin. I could've done tae tak him hame wi me but that widnae hiv been practical.

The next day I'd a couple wee jobs tae dee afore I shut the hoose doon. so I settled doon in my sleepin pyoke wi mixed feelins. Seek at leavin peer Jock-in-the-mooth but glaid tae be leavin...

*

I wiz staanin lookin on as usual but this time the monks were leavin by a door I'd nae noticed afore. They slammed it shut ahin them makkin ma jump then I heard the groan. Lookin doon, I saw the peer man in agony sittin faar they'd left him wi the stake up inside his intimmers. There wiz bleed awye roon faar he sat and I could see he wiz dyin. He lookit up at ma wi sic a look o misery and despair on his face.

I moved towards him.

This time I wisna rooted tae the spot so in seconds I hunkered doon aside him. I tried tae lift him up aff the stake but he howled in agony so I let him be. He spoke tae ma but I didna ken the words he said so he started pyntin at the waa sayin Drostan, Drostan ower and ower.

I'd nae clue fit he meant but tae please him I moved tae the waa and put ae haan on een o the steens. At this he shook his heed so I touched another steen wi the same result. I keepit deein this till at last he nodded his heed. I made the motion o pullin the steen fae the waa and at this he nodded vigorously. I put my fingers at each side o the steen and pulled as hard as I could but nae a move could I get. I raikit in ma pouch for ma pocket knife and cleaned awa the muck fae

the jints. The next time I rived as hard as I could takin the skin and nails fae ma fingers. I'd nae time tae worry aboot it for the man wiz on his last gasps. I pulled an pulled till eventually the steen come free in my haans.

Throwin it tae the side, I put a hann intae the hole. I rummled ma haan aboot till I touched on something. I fellt a strap an jist haaled as hard as I could. Aifter a bit o a Chavez I got fitivver it wiz oot. There in ma haan wiz a big leather satchel.

I heard the man ahin ma gasp oot o him. Turnin, I thocht he'd died but na he'd baith haans oot wavin ma owere wi the bag. He teen it fae me and held it tae his breest wi tears rinnin doon his chikks unheaded.

Aifter a while o this he lookit up at ma an smiled the pain and despair gone fae his face. He put a haan oot seekin ma tae help him tae his feet so I did that. The bleed and the stake were gone fae the fleer and by the looks o't he wiz fine.

Jist then my aal craw came in and sat on his shooder and ae me sic a work the hid wi eenanother. Turnin tae me, he made the sign o the cross then steppit inaboot an gave me a bosie. The aal craw next wint ontae my shooder mutterin awa tae itsel and rubbin its heed on ma cheek.

The man spoke but I'd nae idea o the words. He saw this, and tried some ither words but wi the same results. Next, he opened the satchel an teen oot a huge book. On the cover wiz twa words: Drostans tears. Fin I read them oot loud he went tae his knees and kissed the book.

Stannin up he handed me the book sayin, "abbee et clova!"

I repeated fit I thocht he said.

“Abbey at Clova?”

He smiled and nodded pointin tae himsel he said,
“Kenniff!”

I did the same; “Sanners!”

Wi one last smile he made the sign o the cross as baith him
and my aal craw slowly wint fae sicht.

I jist stood there like a gype lookin aboot ma at the torture
chamber till even it wint fae sicht and I wiz back stannin in the
scullery. Somehow I understood that I’d tae tak Drostan’s book tae
the Abbey o Clova. But there wiz a big problem there. I’d nae idea
faar aboot the Abbey o Clova wiz.

It’s nearly fifty years ago now since that time and that
experience changed me forivver. I did weel in life aifter my
adventures at the big hoose and eventually ended up ownin a lot o
properties. But that is only the material part which means little really.
I got tae see something that changed ‘me’, the person deep inside, in
a wye I still canna explain aa these years aifter.

I’d love tae write here sayin that I’d become a deeply
religious person but that I canna dee for that nivver happened in my
life. That I got tae see the spiritual side o life? Well, I’ve nae doot
aboot that for I only need tae pit oot ma haan and touch Drostan’s
book tae prove that tae masel.

Wiz I dishonest keeping the book? No I dinna think so. If
I’d handed it ower tae the kirk it wid’ve ended up hidden awa and its

existence wid maist probably be denied. This wye at least fowk will get tae read it and touch it if lucky.

Inside the pages are twa locks o Drostan's hair pitten there by his friend Kenniff and some notes written by him aboot Drostan. I used some o his notes tae write the story Drostan's Tears.

I'm nae sure faa the monks were in the torture chamber but poor Kenniff hid suffered at their evil haans for mair than fourteen centuries protectin Drostan's book till I came alang and somehow set him free. That's a mystery that will nivver be solved as tae faa the monks were.

My thinking is that the church hid somehow got wind o Drostan's book and hid sent the monks tae waylay Kenniff on his wye tae Clova. Now, that's pure conjecture on my part but it strikes me as strange that the Abbey o Clova only comes doon tae us as merely a name o a place that could've exsited. My thocht is that fin they couldna find the book they destroyed Clova and eradicated it fae history.

In the event, history tells us the Abbey o Clova wiz lost in time, roon aboot the 10th century some scholars seemed tae think, but like its location the date is a mystery. But Clova ceased tae exist centuries afore, in the sixth century AD. Wi my huddin ontae the book and this being the first time I've ivver lettin dabb aboot it, the scholars will hae a field day fin I publish a copy o the original in the next couple o years. And wi that publication a lot o dates will be changing, as well as lot o details aboot the Picts completely unknown tae history.

I still sometimes see my big aal craw noo an then. Ruby's

her name an she'll fyles sit up in the rowan tree in my gairden an
mutter awa tae ma. She winna come doon for crummles though, jist
contented sittin there lookin doon. I think she keeps tabs on ma
because I've her maister's beuk, or maybe she jist likes tae looks
aifter ma?

I winner noo if Ruby will gee me one last bosie like she
gave Drostan fin my time comes? I do hope so!

Sanners Gow, Gillespie Hoose Banffshire AD 2018

(Note- *The Name Gillespie comes fae the Gaelic Gillie, lad or servant. easpuig, bishop. The servant of the Bishop.*)

GLOSSARY

A

aa- all
aabody- everybody
aal- old
aapron-apron
aathegither- altogether
aathing- everything
aawye- everywhere
abeen- above
ablow- below
abody- everybody
aboot- about
accoont- account
acht- eight
adee- going on, amiss
ae- one
afeaald- honest, sincere
afeard- afraid
afeart- afraid, scared
aff- off
affa- awful; very
affen- often
affoord- afford
afftimes- often; whiles
afore- before
aforehan- beforehand
afront- to the front, in front of
aften- often
agley- awry, wrong
aheed- ahead
ahin- behind
aicht- eight
aichteen- eighteen

aifter- after
aifterhins- afterwards
ain- own
aince- once
ains- owns; once
aipple- apple
airish- chilly
airm- arm
airt- direction; manner; skill
ait- eat
aitin- eating, eaten
aix- axe
alang- along
aleen- alone
aliss- cry of pain or surprise
allooed- allowed
almichty- all mighty
aloo- allow
ana- as well
an- an, and, then
ane- one
aneath- aneth beneath; under
anent- against
aneuch- enough
anither- another
anoo- now; soon
antrin- occasional
apairt- apart
appron- apron
aquant- knowledge of
a'ready- already
aricht- aright, okay
aroon- around
arras- arrows

askit- asked
at- that
atap- on top
athing- everything
athoot- without
atween- between
aul- old
aulest- oldest
aulfashioned- old
fashioned
ava- at all
avast- stop
awa- away
awyted -waited
awauk- awake
aueil- so be it
aweers- nearly; on the
point off
awyte-- I'm sure; await
awytit- awaited
ay- yes
aye- ayee,ayewis- always,
still,yes
ayee- always

B

ba- ball
baa- ball
bachled- worn out
backeinde- autumn; last
backie- back garden
bade- lived
baffies- slippers
baird- beard
bairn- child
baith- both

bakkin- baking
baldy heedit- bald
balloch- narrow mountain
pass
bammy- crazy, stupid
banes- bones
bannock- pancake
bap- bread roll
bare- barren; cold;
barkit- dirty
barra- barrow
bather- bother
batter- thrashing
bawbee- low
denomination coin
be- by
bealin- boil
been- bone
beerial- burial
beeriet- buried
beesom- a broom; nasty
woman
beet- boot
beettlin- thrashing;
beating
begaik- shock; taken
aback; disappointment
beginnin- beginning
ben- through the house;
best room
beuk- book
biddin- invitation; do
what you are told
bide- stay, live; wait
bigg- built
biggin- building
bigsie- proud; conceited;

likely to brag	runs; beating
bikkie- bitch	bluebore- blue patch in clouds
bile- boil	boak- vomit
bilin- boiling	boddom- bottom
bink- fireplace shelf or bin	body- budy- person
birk- birch	ogie roll- black twist
birkie- young woman	tobacco
birl- whirl, spin round	boggie- trailer, cart
birse- bristle; get angry	bondie- bonfire
birslin- completely dry	bonnet- flat cap,
bit- but	bonnie, bonny- beautiful
bittie- small piece	bools- marbles
blaas- boast; meal	boorach- crowd, group
blabbin- talking	bosie cuddle; bosom;
nonsense, prattle	embrace
blaiberies- blueberries	bothy- farm servant's quarters
blate- bashful, timid, modest	bourtree, boontree- elder tree
blaud, blaad- spoil	bowff- hit, blow,bark
blaw- blow	bowfin- barking
blawin- blowing	bowie- barrel
bleatchin- thrashing	bowlie- bowl
bleed- blood	bowelfae- bowlful
bleedin- bleeding	brae- steep road, side of small hill
bleerie watery as in eyes	braid- broad
bleeter- talk nonsense, prattle; clumsy person	braith – breath
bleezin- in flames; very drunk	brak- break
blether- chatter; have a talk	brakfast- breakfast
blibberin- slobbering	brakin- breaking
blin- blind	brammles, brummel-brambles
blindrift- driving snow	brander, branner- grill; gridiron
blink- short spell; moment	bree- liquid; drain
blooterin- dose of the	

potatoes
breed- bread
breeder- brother
breeks- trousers
breem- broom
breenge- dive at, rush
forward
breest- breast
breet- brute
brether- brother
breid- oatcakes
breidpyoke- bread bag
bricht- bright
bridder- brother
brig- bridge
brikks- trousers
brocht- brought
broo- brow
broon- brown
brose- oats made with
boiling water and salt
brunt- burned
bucht- house in disrepair;
place to shelter sheep
bumbee- bumblebee
bun-in-bed- enclosed;
built in bed
bung- throw
burn- stream
busk- get dressed
buss- bush
bygyaan- passing
byke- bees or wasp's nests
byre- cow shed

C

ca- call; drive;push
caa awa- carry on; get
going
caad- called; driven
caain- shoving, moving
caa tee- shut; give a hand
caa throwe- pass; energy;
drive through
caff- chaff
cairried- carried
cairriet- carried
cairy- carry
cairy on- behaviour
cairt- cart
cairt shed- oped shed for
carts
calfie- young calf
canna- cannot
cannle- candle
canny- careful
canterin- spell
cap, caup- wooden bowl
cassie- cobblestones
cattie- cat; catapult
caul, caal- cold
caup- wooden bowl for
brose
chaa- chew
chaamer, chaumer-
where farm servants slept
chap- knock, mash; fellow
chappit- mashed; struck;
knocked
chatterin- chattering
chauve- chaave- struggle

chave-	struggle, young person	cloot-	cloth; clothes
chawed-	chewed	clorted-	a mess; spread messily
cheer-	chair	clype-	tell tales; gossip
cheuch-	tough as in eating	clyse-	clothes
cheyn, chine, chyne-		clyter-	mess; work messily
chain		cog-	wooden bucket
chik-	cheek	collich-	woman
chiel-	man, fellow, chap	collop-	a round of ground beef fried
chirmin-	a bird's call; chirping	connach-	spoil
chitter-	tremble, shiver	conter-	against;
chokit-	choked	contradict	
chowks – chowps-	cheeks; jaws	conteract-	counteract
chuckies-	small stones	coo-	cow
chuckin-	chicken	cooncil-	council
claa-	claw	coont-	count
clachan-	hamlet	coontless-	countless
claes-	clothes	coordly-	cowardly
claiggs-	horseflies	coorie-	crouch
claik-	news, gossip	coorse-	bad, wicked; coarse
clart-	mess	coorse-	foul; stormy
claymore-	broadsword	coo's goosie-	cow's arsehole
cleek-	hook	connectit-	connected
cleg-	horse fly	corn kist-	storage trunk for oats
cleise-	clothes	corn yard-	stack yard
clew-	ball of yarn	corp-	corpse
climm-	climb	corter-	quarter, as in oatcake
clockin hen-	broody hen	cosie-	comfortable, warm
coggies-	small logs for fire	couldna-	could not
clouds-	clouds	coulter-	iron cutter at front of plough
clookit-	scratched by cat		
clooks-	claws		
cloor-	a blow		

coup/cowp- overturn
coup the puddins- vomit
couples- rafters
couthie- agreeable;
friendly
cowk- vomit; retch
cows- surpasses
crabbi- bad tempered
crack- chat; strike; snap
crackit- struck, cracked
craft- croft
craftie- croft
craiter, craitur- creature
crannie- little finger
crap- crop
craw- crow
creel- basket borne on the
back
creeps- goose pimples
crood- crowd
crook- hook; pot hook
above open fire
croon- crown
crummle, crumshikie-
small pieces
crummoch- stout walking
stick
cuddy- donkey; ass
cuppie- cup of tea
curn- a few, a group
cuttit- abrupt; cut
cutty- clay tobacco pipe
cweeled- cooled
cwite- coat

D

daad- large piece
Daavid- David
dachlin daachlin, dauchle-
hanging round, hesitate
daft- foolish
dail- dig over
daith- death
dall- doll
dander- wander, walk
slowly; temper
danders- cinders
danner- wander, slow
walk, stroll
darg- work; toil
darn- (dry) constipation,
(soft) diarrhoea
daylicht- daylight
deasil, desule- sun wise
deave- pester, annoy;
bore
dee- do; die
deece, deese- turf or
wooden settee
deed- dead
deef- deaf
deein- the act of dying,
cdoing
deem- girl; servant girl
deen- done
deemie, deemy- young
girl
dee't- do it, died
deet- died
deid- dead
deil- devil

dellt-	dug	dottled-	in dotage
denner-	dinner, lunch	doup-	backside
deuk-	duck	draitin-	the act of
dicht-	wipe; winnow	defecation	
dichtid, dichtit-	wiped	drap-	drop
dichtin-	thrashing;	drapped-	dropped
wiping		drappy-	small quantity
didna-	did not	draucht, draacht-	
dike, dyke-	wall of stones	draught	
or turf		dreel-	drill; amount
din-	noise; dark	dreep-	drip, drop
complexion		dreich-	dreary
dinna-	do not	dret, drait-	defecate
dird-	lump; bump	droochit-	drank
dirl-	jar; pain; ring	drookit-	soaked
disna-	does not	droon-	drown
div-	do	drooth-	thirst; drought
divot-	large slice; sod,	dross, drush-	mushy
turf		pieces of peat or coal	
diz-	does	drouth-	thirst; drink; a
dizzen-	dozen	drunk	
dochter-	daughter	drucht-	draught; drought
dock-	backside, bum	drysteen-	stone wall with
dollop-	lump	no mortar	
doo-	dove	dubs-	mud
doocot-	dovecot	dumfoonert-	at a loss for
doo's clockin-	family of	words; bewildered	
two, one of each		dumpish-	foolish,
dook-	swim; wooden	forgetful	
wedge		dunt-	thud; blow; bump
doon-	down	dyke-	stone or turf wall
door tee-	close door		
doot-	doubt		
dose-	large number		
dother-	daughter		
dottle-	become stupid and		
fretful			

E

ee- eye, you
 eebroos- eyebrows
 eelashes- eyelashes

een- one
eenanither- one another
eence- once
eenoo- just now
eeran- errand
eerans, eerands-
shopping, purchases
ee're- you are
eese- use
eesless- useless
eether- either, neither
efter- after
efterhin- afterwards
efterneen- afternoon
eggies- eggs
eins- ends
eneuch- enough
erse- arse
ersholt tae brakfast time-
from arse to guts
etten- eaten
eyne, eyn, eyns, eynt-
end, ends, ended
eynoo- just now; soon
eynerigg- end rig
eyvenoo- just now

F

fa- who?
fa- fall
faa- who?; fall
faan- fallen
faar- where?
faa's- whose?
fadder- father
fae- from

fae't- from it
faimily- family
faimilie- families
fair- quite; easily
fair- good weather
fairlies- wonders,
ongoings
farm- farm
farmer- farmer
faither- father
fa'iver, fa'ivver- whoever
fairyween- whirlwind
fammil, fammel- fingers
or hand
fan- when
fang, fyang- thick slice,
lump
far faar- distant, where
far aff- far off
farawa- far away
fash- worry, fuss
fauldin faaldin- folding
feart- afraid; scared
feary- scary
fecht- fight
fechting- fighting
fee'd- engaged to work in
farm etc
feel- fool
feenish- finish
feenished- finished
feerin- first furrow cut
Feersday- Thursday
feeties- feet
fegs, feggs- expressing
surprise
fella- fellow

ferlies-	wonders, marvels;
watching	ongoings
farmers-	farmers
fermin-	farming
fessed-	fetched; brought
fettle-	hale & hearty
fewe, fyowe-	few
ficherin-	fiddling about
fie fie-	so so
file-	dirty
files, fyles-	sometimes
fin-	when
fin-	find; feel as in touch
finivver-	whenever
firewid-	firewood
fit-	what; foot; fit
fite-	white
fitfaa-	footfall
fitiver, fitivver-	whatever
fitna-	which
fittid-	footed; fitted
fit wye-	what way, how,
why	
flech-	flea
fleein-	flying
fleer-	floor
fleerish-	steel for flint;
flash	
flees-	flies, fleas
flegg, fleg-	frighten
fleggit-	frightened, got a
scare	
flit-	move to other
location	
float-	flat cart
flooer-	flower
fly-	cunning
focht-	fought
fochendeen-	exhausted
foggie	bummer- wild bee
foo-	how?
fool-	dirty, foul
foon-	base
foonert-	exhausted
fooshty, foosty-	mouldy
follaet-	followed
follyin-	following
forbyes-	besides; in addition
fore-	to the front
foreairm-	forearm
forehan, forehaan-	
advance; first; foremost	
forneen-	forenoon
forenicht-	evening
forfochen-	exhausted
forivver-	forever
forky tail-	earwig
forrit-forritt-	forward
fower-	four
fowk-	folk; people
freen-	friend, relation
freently-	friendly
freest-	frost
fricht-	fright
fu-	full
fullt-	filled
fullin-	filling
fummilt-	fumbled
fun-	found
fun-	whin
fung-	let fly
furr-	furrow
fuskers-	whiskers

fuskie- whisky
fuspered- whispered
fussle- whistle
futrats- furretts-
weasels, stoats
fyach- impatience
fyacht- fight
fyang- piece of something
fyew- fyewe- few
fyle- while
fyle- made a mess, shat
yourself
fylie- short while
fylies- now and then
fyowe, fyow- few

G

gaan, gan- going
gaed- went
gadgie- fellow
gairishin- cold draughty
house
gait- way
gaither, gither- gather
gaivle- gable
gale- gable
galluses- braces
galoot- stupid person
gang- go
gansey- jersey
gar, garr- made to do
something; force
gealt- frozen
gean- wild cherry
gear- goods, possessions
geen- gone; given

gees't- give me it
geet- child
gey, gye- very; rather;
geypid, geypit- stupid
gie, gee- give
giein, giein- giving, given
gid- went
gig- two wheeled carriage
gin- if
ging, gyang- go
girdle- baking plate
girn- complain
girnal- chest for meal
girnin- complaining
girse, girss- grass
githered- gathered
glaid- glad
glaikit- stupid
glaiss- glass
gled- glad
glebe- minister's field
Glens o Syne- place where
yesterday and tomorrow
meet
glimmerin- a distant
light; half closed
glintin- shining
gloamin- early evening
glower- scowl
glowerin- scowling
golach, gollach- beetle
goon- gown; dress
goor- mud, slush
goud- gold
gowan- daisy
gowk- fool; cuckoo
gowkit- retched

graan- very good
grabbit- grabbed
graip- four pronged fork
grannie- grandmother
grate- cooking range
gravat- neck scarf
greep- gutter in a byre
greet- cry, weep
greetin- the act of crying
grin- grind
grippy- greedy,
avaricious
growe, growed- grow,
grown
grummle- grumble; ill at
ease
grumphie- bad mood
grun- ground
grunny- grandmother
guddle- catch fish by
hand at side of a stream.
guff- stench
gully- large knife
gushet- small triangle of
land; gusset
gutters- muddy mess,
mud
gutterin- muddling
g'waa- go away
gweed- good
gyaad- expressing disgust
gyaan, gyan- going
gype- fool
gypit- stupid
gyte- to lose the temper,
go mad

H

haaf- half
haan- hand
haanfae- handful
haar- cold mist or fog
haathorn- hawthorn
haaver- half
habber- stutter
hae- have
haein- having, had
haft haft- handle, shaft
hagger- badly cut as in
cloth; jagged cut
haik- walk; on the
scrounge
hail- whole, hail
hailsteens- hailstones
hamespun- rough coarse
cloth
haimmer- hammer
hairm- harm
hairst- harvest
hairt- heart
hairbrakkin- heart
breaking
hairy mouldit- mouldy
haived- heaved, thrown
haivers- lies
hale- whole
hallirackit- without care;
wild
hame- home
han, haan- hand
handit- handed
hanfae, haanfae- handful
hanhud, haanhud- hand

hold	hippit- stiff about the hips
hank- lump; control	hirplin- limping
hanless, haanless- clumsy; awkward	hirpled- limped
hannilt- handled	hisna- has not
hantle- crowd; large quantity	hittin- hitting
hap, haap- cover	hiv- have
happit, haapit- covered	hiz- us, his
haud- hold	hoast- cough
haugh- ground by a river	hoch- thigh
haverin- tell lies; speaking nonsense	hodden grey- coarse homespun cloth
heapit- piled up	hogg- young sheep hoodie craw- hooded crow
heed, heid- head	hoolet- owl
heedache- headache	hoor, hooer- whore
heich- high; loudly	hoose- house
heilands- highlands	hoosie- small house
hert- heart; mind; stomach	hornie gollach- earwig
heuk- hook	hotterin- simmering
hey- hay	hough- thigh; leg
hicht- height	howe- hollow
hid- had	howk- dig
hidin- thrashing, beating; hiding	hud- hold
hidna- had not	huddin- holding
himsel- himself	hummel doddies- gloves without fingers
hin- had	humpy backit- hunch back
hingin luggit- dejected	hun- hound
hinmaist- last	hunker- squat
hinna- have not	hunner, hunder- hundred
hinner- hinder; hindmost	hunnerwecht- hundredweight
hinnereyn- end; last	hurl- ride in a cart etc
hinnerin- hindering, holding back	hurlie- child's home made cart
hippen- baby's nappy	

hut- hit
hyeuk- reaping hook
hyne- far
hyow- hoe

I

ile- oil
ilha- every; each
ill aff- poor; badly off
ill fashioned- inquisitive
ill likit- unpopular
ill mainnert- ill
mannered
ill naitert- bad humoured
ill trickit- mischievous
ill yokit- badly matched
impident- impudent
imsel- himself
inabout- in about
ingaan' ingyan- in going
intae- into
intil- intill- into
intimmers- insides
ireneerie- rusty water,
iron taste
isna- is not
ither- other
itherwyse- otherwise
iver, ivver- ever
ivery ivvery- every
iveverything- everything

J

jaicket- jacket
jalouse- suspect, figure

out
jandies- jaundice
jeel- frozen, cold
jeelie- jelly
jeelt- numb with the cold
jeests- joists
jeukin- dodging
jile- jail
jine- join
jined- joined
jiner- joiner
jing-bang- whole lot
jink- dodge
jinkit- evaded
jist- just
jobbies- prickly
joog- jug
jook- duck; dodge
jumpit- jumped
jynin- joining; joined

K

kail brose- oat meal with
water kail boiled in
kaim- comb
kebbuck, kyboch- whole
round of cheese
keek- sly look
keepin- keeping
keepit- kept
ken- know
kent- knew; known
kine- sort of; kind
kinkhoast- whooping
cough
kinichted, kinichtit-

delighted
kinna- kind of
kinnlin- kindling
kirkyard- churchyard
kirk- mess
kirnin- making a mess
kist- chest
kitchie- kitchen, kitchen maid
kittle- tickle
kittlie- ticklish
knichtit, knichtet-
delighted
knotty tams- lumpy brose
knowe- knoll
knypin, knipin- moving
fast; keeping going
kyAACk- oatcake
kye- cows

L

laach- laugh
laached- laughed
laachter- laughter
laddie- boy, young man
laft- loft
laich- low
laid- flattened; load
laiddier- ladder
lair- sink as in muddy ground
laird- lord
laldie, lalldie-
punishment, telling off
lammies- lambs
lang- long

langer- longer
langest- longest
lang lip- sulky expression
langsyne- long ago, long since
larik- larch
larry- lorry
lass, lassie- girl, young girl
latchy- nearly late
lat fung- let fly
lavvie- lavatory, w.c.
lay tee- get stuck in as in food or work
leatherin- thrashing; hurrying
leave aleen- let alone
lee- lie
lee- sheltered side
leears- liars
leefaleen- alone, on ones own
leein- lying
leen- self
leerup- cuff on the ear etc
lees- lies
leesome leen- entirely alone
lem- earthenware
len- loan
ley- pasture
licht- light
lichted- lighted; landed
lichtnin- lightning
lick- blow; fast
lickin- thrashing
licks- beats, better than

likit-	liked	maitter-	matter
lintie-	linnet	mak, maak-	make
lip-	cheek; to be	makkin-	making
impudent		makkin on-	pretending,
livellt-	levelled	kidding	
liverik-	skylark	makkin tracks-	setting
livin-	living	out	
loaf-	bread	maleen-	alone
lochan-	lochin- small lake	manna-	must not
loll-	lazy person	mannie-	man
lookit-	looked	mappie-	rabbit
loon-	boy, chap	marled-	mottled
loonie-	young boy	marra-	match, marrow
loorach-	trollop	marraless-	not matching
loup-	jump, leap	as in socks	
loupin-	jumping	masel-	myself
louped-	jumped	mask-	tea to infuse
loups-	jumps	maun-	must
lowe-	blaze	meal-	oatmeal
lowse-	loose, untie	mealie dumplin-	meal
lowsin time-	time to stop	pudding	
work		meal mull-	meal mill
lug-	ear	meallie jeemy-	meal
luggies-	ears	sausage	
lum-	chimney	mear-	mare
lum hat-	top hat	meen-	moon
M		meenister-	minister
ma –	mother, my	meenit-	minute
maet –	food	meenlicht-	moonlight
maik-	copper	mell haimmer-	heavy
coin		hammer for posts	
mair-	more	messages-	shopping
mairriet-	married	Mey-	May month of
maist-	most	michna-	might not
maister-	master	micht-	might
mait-	food	michty-	mighty
		midden-	dunghill

midder- mother
middlin- fair
midgie- midge
midnicht- midnight
milk bowie- milk pail
min- man
mine- mind as in
remember
minty, meenty- minute
miscaa- speak ill of
mish mash- jumble, mess
mistakken- mistaken
mither- mother
mixter maxter- jumble,
everything mixed
moch- moth
moch ettin- moth eaten
mochin aboot- going about
aimlessly
mochy- mouldy
mollachs- loiters
mony- many
moofaes- mouthfuls
mools- earth
moose- mouse
mooth- mouth
moothfae- mouthful
morn- tomorrow
mornin- morning
muchty- mouldy smell;
muggy
muck- manure
muckle- much, large
muck midden- dunghill
muir- moor
mull- mill
mullart- miller

mull lead- mill race
mull vricht- mill wright
murl- small piece
murlietuck oatcake
broken into milk
myout- sound, murmur

N

na- no, not
nae- no; none; not any
naebody- nobody
naewye- nowhere, no way
napper- head
narra- narrow
neebours- neighbours
needna- need not
neen- none
neep- turnip
neepheed- stupid person
neether- neither
neglekit- neglected
neist- next
neuk- corner
newfanglet- new
fashioned
nicht- night
nickie tams- straps below
knees to stop dust
nickum- little scamp
nigh- near
nippit- nipped
nithin, nithing- nothing
nivver- never
nocht- nothing
noo- now
nooadays- nowadays

noo an en- now and then
norr- than
nott- needed
nowt- cattle
nyaff- stupid
nyakit, nyaakit- naked
nyatter- ill tempered
person
nyatterin- chattering;
nagging

O

o- of
ocht- aught
onfaa- heavy fall rain or
snow etc
ongaans, organs, ongyans-
goings on
ontae- onto
ontill- onto
ony- any
onybody- anybody
onyhoo- anyway
onything- anything
onywye- anyhow, anyway
oo- wool
oor- our
oor- hour
oorsels- ourselves
oot- out
ootbrak ootbrakk-
outbreak
ootdee- out do
ootpoor- downpour
oot wi- outside, beyond
orra- rough, messy

orra beast- horse for
general work
orraman- odd job man on
farm
o't- of it
ower- too, over
owercast- overcast
owergyaa- going over
owerseen- overseen,
cursed
owerseein- overseeing
ower't- over it
owsen, ousin, ousen- oxen
oxter- the crook of the
arm, armpit
oxterfae- armful

P

pairish- parish
pairt- part
paired- parted
palin- fence
pan loaf- refined speech;
putting it on
pare- peel
pech- pant
pechin- panting
peelie wallie- sickly
peer- poor
peesieweep- lapwing
peetered- ran out, slowly
runs out
peety- pity
peewit- lapwing
pey- pay
peyed- paid

peysers- pease meal
brose
pheesic- medicine
picherin- muddling
pick-mirk- pitch dark
picter- picture
piece- bread with jam or
fancy biscuit
pikit weer, pykitweir-
barbed wire
pint- point
pints- boot laces
pirn- reel of thread
pit- put
pitten- put
pittin aff- delaying
plank- hide
planked- hidden

plashy- showery
ploo- plough
plooed- ploughed
plooin- ploughing
plook- pimple
ploomin- ploughman
plottin- very hot and
sweating
plowt- splash
plunkie- sweets
plydie- plaid
pooch- pocket
pooder- powder
poors- pours
pottit heed- jellied meat
poun- pound
pow- head
powk- poke

powkin- poking
powkit- poked
pown- pound
preen- pin
press- cupboard
prigged- begged; pleaded
prood- proud
pu- pull
puckle- a few; some;
number; quantity
puckles- on occasions,
occasionally
pucklie- some; small
quantity
pu'd- pulled
puddens- guts
puddock- frog, toad
pu'in- pulling
pun- pound weight
pykit weir- barbed wire
pyntit- pointed
pyock, pyoke- bag
pyot- magpie; tell tale
pyugg- seagull, herring
gull

Q

quate- quiet
quatin- quieting
queets- ankles
quine- girl
quinie- young girl

R

raans- fish roes

raas-	rows	reestin-	roosting
raggit-	ragged	reets-	roots
rag nail-	torn skin on side of nail	reyns-	reins
raik, rake-	search for something	richt-	right
raip-	rope	rick-	smoke
raivel-	muddle; tangled	rickit-	smoked
raivellt-	confused in mind; muddled;	rift-	belch
dishevelled		riggin-	top ridge of roof
rakins-	the last of	riggit-	dressed; ready
rampan-	wild	riggs-	land
ran dan-	spree as in drinking	rigoot-	outfit
rantin-	angry	rin-	run
ranntle-tree-	beam across the chimney from which	ringle eed-	cast or circle in the eye
pot hangs		rinnin-	running
rarin-	roaring	rive-	split; pull harshly
rax-	stretch; reach	rivven-	torn; burst
raxed-	strained	road-	way
raxin-	stretching	roadit-	started out; ready
ream-	cream	roch-	rough
reapin-	reaping	rodden-	rowan berry
redd-	clear, rid; tidy; sort out	roon-	round
reed-	red	rooser-	watering can
reed het-	red hot	roost-	rust
reef-	roof	roosty-	rusty
reek-	smoke	roset-	rosin
reekie-	smoky; smoke filled room	rosety eyns-	shoemaker's thread
reekie peter-	oil lamp for bikes	rosety reets-	fir roots used to light fires
reeshlin-	rustling as in rustling dry corn	rottans-	rats
		roup-	sale of farm etc
		rowan-	mountain ash
		rowe-	roll
		rowies-	bread roll
		rabbit-	rubbed
		ruck-	hay or corn stack

rue- regret
rugg- pull; drag
ruggin- pulling; dragging
rummle- rumble
rummled- rumbled, tore
at
rummlin- rumbling

S

saa- saw
saa- wood saw; sow
saach- willow
saachan buss- willow
bush
saain- sowing
saat- salt
saaty- salty
saan- sand
sabbed- sobbed
sabbin- sobbing
sabbit- sobbed
sae- so
saft- soft; soft in the head
sair- sore; difficult
sair fecht- struggle
sair hert- grief
sair made- great
difficulties
sair nott- sorely needed
sang- song
saps- bread soaked in
milk
sark- shirt
sarkin- roof boards for
slates
sattled- settled

sauch- willow
sawin- sowing
sax- six
sax month- six months,
term of engagement
saxpence- sixpence
saxteen- sixteen
scallie- slate pencil to
write on slate
scaddit- fired skin
scauld- scald
scaup- useless barren
ground
sclate- slate
sclype- lazy, worthless
person; thud
scomfish- sicken with
smell; suffocate
scoosh- squirt
scoor- a smack; scrub
scoors- diarrhoea
scratched- screamed
scran- scrounge
scrat- scratch
scrattin- scratching
scud- a good smack
scuff- brush; near miss
scunner- disgust
scunnersome- disgusting
scutter- potter about;
work aimlessly
seck- sack
seek- look for; sick
seekin- looking
seen- soon; seen, saw
seener- sooner
seenest- soonest

seepin-	soaked, seeping	shoogle-	shaky; move lazily
seerup-	syrup	shortsome-	enjoyable
seivinth-	seventh	shottie-	turn
sell-	ones self	showd-	swaying,rocking
sells-	selves	sic-	such
sellt-	sold	sic like-	such like
seemit-	vest	sicht-	sight
sen-	send	sidewyse-	sideways
shaak, shak-	shake	sikkin-	seeking, wanting
shackle been-	wrist bone	siller-	money
shaddas-	shadows	skail-	spill
shaef-	sheaf	skelpit-	smacked
shaefs-	sheaves	skipperin-	sleeping rough
shancouls-	ghosts; bad people	skirl-	scream
shanks-	legs	skirlie-	fried oatmeal and onions
charger-	stunted person or animal	skirlin-	screaming
sharn-	excrement	skitie-	small amount;
sharny-	smeared with excrement; dung	slippery	
shauchelt, shaachelt-		skitters-	diarrhoea
shambling		sklate-	slate
shave- shaave-	slice of bread	sklyter-	slide about in mud
shee-	shoe	skraich-	screech, scream
sheel-	shovel	skweel-	school
sheelachs-	small grains	skyow-	squint
sheelicks-	small grains	slaachet-	slaughter
sheen-	shoes	slaachter-	slaughter
shew-	sew	slaivers-	saliva
shewin-	sewing	sleekit-	cunning
shidna-	should not	sloorach-	a mess; stew with a lot of ingredients
shiftit-	change position	smuchterin-	smouldering
shoochled-	shuffled	snaw-	snow
shooders-	shoulders	snootit-	peaked as in cap
shooers-	showers	snorl-	tangle; stuck

snotters-	snot	sprots-	rushes
snyavin-	snowing	spunks-	matches
somewye-	somehow; somewhere; someplace	spurdie-	sparrow
soo-	sow (female pig)	spurtle-	wooden stirrer
soochin-	sighing	squarr-	square
sook-	suck	squarrin-	squared
soor-	sour	sta-	stall
soorick-	sorrel	staave-	staff
soors-	in sour mood; becomes sour	stackit-	stacked, piled
sooth-	south	stairved-	starved
sortit-	sorted	stane-	stone
sotter-	mess	stang-	to sting
sowels-	souls	stan, staan –	stand
sowens-	dish like gruel	stannin,	staanin-
sowpin-	soaking	standing	
spaad-	spade	stap-	stuff
spail-	splinter, wood	stappit foo-	stuffed full
shavings		steed-	stood
spak, spakk-	spoke	steekit-	closed
spang-	long step	steel-	stool
sparras-	sparrows	steen-	stone
spaver-	trouser fly	steep-	soak
spawl-	tear a lump out of; tear apart	steer-	stir
speelin-	climbing	stervin-	very cold; hungry
speen-	spoon	stirkie-	young bullock
speer, speir-	ask	stoot-	stout
spick, spikkin-	speak, speaking	stot-	bullock; swing;
spile-	spoil	saunter	
spleet new-	brand new	stra-	straw
spleiter-	blustery shower; to make a dive at	straacht-	straight
spik-	speak	straai raips-	straw ropes for ricks
spikkin-	speaking	strae-	straw
		streetch-	stretch
		strinth-	strength
		strushel-	untidy, slovenly

suttin- sat down, having
sat, sitting
swack, swaak- supple
swads- swedes
swall- swell
swalliet- swallowed
swallt- swollen
sweel- wash
sweem- swim
sweer- swear
swite, swyte- sweat
swye- bar over fire
swype- sweep
swyte- sweat
sye- sieve
syne- since; then

T

tabacca- tobacco
tae- to
taes- toes
tackets- hobnails
tag- belt for punishment
at school
taickle- tackle
tak, taak- take
takkin- taking
tangles- sea weed
tap- top
tarry fingert- thief
tatties- potatoes
tay, tae- tea
tayspeen- teaspoon
tchyave- struggle
tee- to
tee- shut

tee- also, as well
teem- empty
teemed- emptied
teerin- tearing
tee tillt- to get on with it;
against
teen- taken
teetin- peeping
tellt- told
tendit- tended
terrifeet- terrified
teuch- tough
teuchat- lapwing
teyler, tyler- tailor
thack- thatch
thankit- thanked
thawless- weakly
thegither- together
theirsels- themselves
the morn- tomorrow
thocht- thought
thochtie- a little; a bit
more
thole- endure,
thon- yon; that, those
thooms- thumbs
thraan, thrawn- obstinate
thrang- crowd
thrapple- throat
threed- thread
threedbare- well worn
thristles- thistles
throwe- through
throwe caa- drive; pass
through
thunner- thunder
tichin- tighten

ticht- tight
tichter- tighter
till't- to it
timmer- timber
timmer doon- calm down
tine- lose
tint- lost
tirraneezin- torment
tither- other
tocher- marriage dowry;
muddy place
tod- fox
toon- town
topper- excellent
tossle- tassel
tousle- dishevelled
tow, towe- rope, string;
hemp fibre
traichle, trauchle, traachle
- struggle; harassed state
traik- roam; gad about
traipse- wander idly
traivel- travel
trickit- delighted
trippit- tripped
troch- trough
troot- trout
trystin- entice; meeting
with
tummelt- fell; tumbled
tup- ram
twa- two
twal- twelve
tyaavin- struggling
tyangs- tongs
tye- yes; certainly
tyeuch- tough

tyne -lose
U
umman- woman
unbiden- uninvited
unce- ounce
unsocht- unsought
uptak, uptakk-
understand

V
veesit- visit
vennel- alley; cold
dwelling in state of
disrepair
vex- distressed
vratch- wretch
vricht- joiner
vrocht- worked
vrochtin- working
vice- voice

W
wa- way, away
waa- wall
waaheed- wall head
waaken- awoke
waakit- walked
waal- well
waan- willow, sallow
waar- worse
waas- walls
waashed- washed
waasteens- ruins

wabbit-	exhausted	whaar-	where
wabbs-	webs	wha-	where
waddin-	wedding	whaup-	curlew
waiker-	weaker	wheeple-	whistle; throat
wakit, waikit-	walked	wheesht-	be quiet
wanner-	wander	whilie-	while, whilsts
wark-	work	whit-	what
wast-	west	wi-	with,
wastcoat -	waistcoat	wid-	would; wood
watch-	take care	wids-	woods
watter-	water	widdershins-	against the sun
weariet-	dispirited	widdie-	small wood
wearin awa-	leaving; dying	widdies-	woods
wearin on-	getting old	widdin-	wooden
weary for-	longing for	widna-	would not
weasel-	sly person	wifie-	woman
wecht-	weight	wik-	week
wechty-	heavy	wikeyne, wikeyn-	
wee-	small	weekend	
weel-	well	wikks-	weeks
weemin-	women	winda, windae, windee-	
ween-	wind	window	
weer-	wear	winnert-	wondered
weer-	wire	winna-	will not
weer awa-	die	wint-	went, want
weerin-	wearing	wintin-	wanting
weerin on-	getting late; getting older	wintit-	wanting
weesht-	be quiet	wir-	our
weet-	wet	wird-	word
weety-	very wet	wirsels-	ourselves
werena-	were not	wirsit, wursit-	yarn
wersh-	dry in the mouth	wis-	was
weskit-	waistcoat	wi's-	with us
wey-	weigh	wisna-	was not
wha-	who	withershins-	anti clockwise; against the sun

witherwyes-	weather ways	yirn-	curdled milk
withoot-	without	yoamin-	smoke
wiz-	was	yockie-	itchy
woundit-	wounded	yoke tee-	get started
wrang-	wrong	yokin-	preparing horse
wrunckled-	wrinkled	for a day's work	
wun-	arrived home; made through; dried	yokin time-	starting time
wupped,	wuppit-	yokit-	began, started
wound,	covered	yon-	that; yonder
wyte-	way	yowe,	yowie-
wyte-	wait	yowll-	sheep howl of a dog; howl of pain
wytin-	waiting	yule-	Christmas.
wytit-	waited		

Y

yaaval,	yavil-	second
day's broth		
yalla	yite-	yellowhammer
yammerin-	talking	loudly
yard-	back	garden
yark-	wrench;	drive hard
yarkit-	tore at;	rugged;
stroved	hard	
ye-	you	
yella---	yellow	
yella	yite-	yellow
hammer		
ye'll-	you	will
yer-	your	
yersel-	yourself	
yestreen-	yesterday	
yett-	gate;	cheek of door
ye've-	you	have
yin-	one	
yince-	once	

