

SCHOOL MEMORIES

The original of this book is kept
on the Steward's desk
in the Heritage Centre
and is for visitors to write down any
memories or recollections of a
School in the Glenkens

This file contains the items collected
during the exhibition in 2002

If you have a contribution to make
please ask for the book
which is here tonight

Agnes Riley, Hazel Rendle & Alison Bradley
(all nee Picken) born at Grennan, Dalry and moved away in
1948 - 54 years ago!

Having a wonderful sentimental weeks' holiday renewing our
youth

***In Mr Singleton's class on a Friday after-
noon while he collected the money, we were set to
"parsing". Great stuff!***

***I also remember being belted for getting less
than 5 out of 10 for Mental Arithmetic. - and
the wonderful memories of Miss Lawsons's train-
ing on the Modulator. Great early training!***

My memories of 54 years past are not so vivid
as my sisters but it has been a wonderful experience
re-visiting our roots.

20th April 2002

Memories of Stroanfreggan School

I started school in August/September 1919 aged five and three quarters, rather late because of distances to walk - one mile over the hill and joined road at Mary Bell's Bridge. My father took me on the first day and Tom Galloway, Blackmark, conveyed me to Shiel turn where I met my father and ended my first day.

Miss Jenkins was my first teacher but she was soon replaced by Mrs Ross who came from Bo'ness. My attendance was fairly good; I enjoyed my school days. In the morning we had Bible, then reading and sums.

At dinner time after eating my piece we played on the knowe outside and in the summer went down to the burn where we waded in the water and the boys guddled for trout. Wattie Hastings and Rab Bell were experts at this.

In the afternoon we had History which I loved. It was very Scottish based being mainly about Wallace and Bruce (no Romans or Tudors for us), then perhaps Geography. We had a piano and sang "The Rowan Tree" and "Strawberry Fair".

We enjoyed the annual visit of Mr Whiteley from Kirkcudbright, who taught us to sing "Dashing Away with the Smoothing Iron" with great gusto. We also had friendly visits from Mr and Mrs Gourlay, Kenbank, Dalry and the Rev Mr Anderson and wife and daughter from Dalry.

Later I had two walking companions Joan and Jean Gillespie from Knocksting. They had further to come and met me in the top of Fingland hill at the post erected by my father. First to arrive put a flat stone on the top of the post to indicate we had passed on.

We had a "Coats" library in school, which contained all Sir Walker Scott's novels and some of Dickens and for lighter reading "Robinson

Crusoe", "The Mill on the Floss" and "Adam Bede" etc.

We had two large maps on the wall - one of Scotland and one of the world. On Thursdays Hyslop the grocer came from Carsphairn and we children were allowed to spend our penny for one bar of "Battleaxe" treacle toffee. It tasted delicious and was good to buy.

The school was warmed by a large coal fire. We nearly all wore clogs (no wellingtons then) and I once burnt mine when sitting them to dry at the fire, after a damp tramp on a wet morning. In the winter the local shepherds had a Carpet Bowling Club in the school and met once a week and once a year they also held a very well attended dance, where most people came on bicycles or on foot.

The school had (has) 5 Rowan trees around it and I loved to see their lovely red berries. Mrs Ross said the trees were to keep the witches away. Mrs Ross had a strap but it was never used on her twelve to fourteen pupils.

After Mrs Ross' departure we had Mrs Thomas (and her five children) who came from Scourie in Sutherland. We didn't learn a lot from her, but we did a lot of knitting - boys as well, and singing. (She was Welsh). After a year she departed and we had Miss Laird temporarily who we liked very much. She lodged at Stroanpatrick with the Hunters.

Then came our very best teacher Mrs Alexander who was a graduate of St Andrew's University and we all made significant progress. Her husband drove the newly acquired school bus (it was a van really) but seemed like a golden chariot to us. I didn't have long in it because it was time for me to leave school. I loved my days at Stroanfreggan where we got a good grounding in the basics of reading, writing and spelling and I learnt my "tables".

Mary Watson nee Wallace

Meadowhead School

Annie Talman - Great aunt of Anne Talman, student at Marbrack - retired from Meadowhead School in 1915.

Died during First World War serving as a nurse on hospital ship.

Family resided at Waterside in Ayrshire then Ayr.

A photo of Annie Talman in her uniform is now included in the exhibition

1947 was the year of the big snow and I can remember the roads being closed for a week. At that time I was teaching sewing in several of the Glenkens Schools

I remember coming to Carsphairn on the first bus through to teach for half a day. The other half was supposed to have been spent in Stroanfreggan. The bus went on to Ayr where the drivers refused to do the return journey to Castle Douglas

The only way I could get back was by thumbing a lift on the butcher's van from Dalmellington which got me to Dalry and then I got a lift on a lorry that was loaded with bricks

When I got to our road end my father and the men were shovelling their way through the snow into the farm. They were amused to see my mode of transport

Jessie R Templeton nee Nelson

*Margaret Finnie nee Martin,
daughter of May Martin,
student teacher at Stroanfreggan School
September 1954*

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*I had completed two years of teacher
training at Jordanhill College.*

*As I was intending to specialise in Rural
Education I came to Stroanfreggan School to
observe how a rural school was conducted.*

*I was extremely fortunate to be here while
Mrs Couper was Head Teacher*

STROANFREGGAN RE-UNION 18 AUGUST 2002

Signatures and details of those attending

Additional information in italics

Robert Maxwell	1947 - 1950	Corlae
Jane Scott (nee Bell)	1928	Craigengillan
James Bell	1930 - 1940	Craigengillan
John Hastings	1917 - 1924	
Mary Sharp <i>nee McCubbin</i>	1933 - 1942	<i>Auchenshinnoch</i>
Phillip McCubbin	1934 - 1939	Auchenshinnoch
Isa Dalziel	1929 - 1938	Strahanna
Sam Adamson	1935 - 1942	Polcheskie
Andrew Adamson	1935 - 1942	Polcheskie
Flora Stewart (MacCallum)	1951 - 1953	Troston
Mary Massie (MacCallum)	1951 - 1953	Troston
Jean Bell	1950 - 1957	Smeaton
Nan Thorburn nee Hutchison	1925 - 1928	Muirdrochwood
Margaret Brown (nee Thorburn) started school	Polharrow 1950,	year before it closed
Mary McMorran (Bell)	1946 - 1952	Smeaton
William Pringle	1943 - 1945	Stroanpatrick
Nancy Dalziel	1932 - 1941	Strahanna

Jean Hunter	1936 - 1943	Stroanpatrick
Moira Bell	1944 - 1950	Smeaton
Mary Martin nee Hutchison	1916 - 1918	Strahanna
Margaret Finnie nee Martin	September 1954	Student Teacher
Janet Jones (Blackstock)	1957 - 1964	Strahanna
Yvonne Grant (MacTaggart)	1955 - 1962	Knocksting
Susan Bell (Tait)	1958 - 1965	Auchrae
Jessie Lorimer (Hunter)	1935 - 1944	Stroanpatrick
Mary Watson (Wallace)	1920 - 1928	Fingland
Robert Barrie	1947 - 1954	Muirdrochwood
Bell Nicol (Pringle)	1943 - 1950	Stroanpatrick
Dorothy Faulds (Wallace)	1961 - 1965	Fingland
Colin Watret	1963 - 1965	Muirdrochwood
Moya Watret	1960 - 1965	Muidrochwood
David McCubbin	1962 - 1965	Auchenshinnoch
Jessie Seaton (<i>nee Pringle</i>)	1943 - 1946	<i>Stroanpatrick</i>
Andrew McCubbin	1940 - 1952	<i>Auchenshinnoch</i>
Bessie Wilson (Dalziel)	1934 - 1943	<i>Strahanna</i>
Nicholas Wallace (Cowan)	1930 - 1944	Fingland
Jim Dalziel	1937 - 1946	Strahanna

*Was at Carsphairn School
1935 to 1937.*

*George Ashworth who was
at school with me was
second (SEC) Engineer on
the Queen Mary*

John Reid 10th May 2002

Mrs Janet Jones (nee Blackstock)
Strahanna
Attended Stroanfreggan School 1957 - 1964
Teacher Mrs A J Couper

I received all my primary education at Stroanfreggan School where I spent many happy days along with a number of other country children. At one point the numbers were as low as nine but they also reached twenty four at one stage - quite demanding on one room.

I started school with two other pupils after Easter in 1957: at that time there were two intakes at the start of each of the summer and autumn terms. At the end of the first day we received 6d (2½p) and an apple from Mrs Couper. During my time at Stroanfreggan the younger children sat at the front nearer the teacher's desk while the older children sat towards the back of the class.

During the years I developed the habit of boarding the school bus as it headed up the glen rather than boarding it on its downward journey - such was my haste to get to school. The only days on which I was reluctant to attend were those when the school doctor or dentist visited - I developed mysterious illnesses. On one occasion the local postman told my mother that he had seen me being hauled into the dental caravan. After leaving school I became a dental nurse and more than thirty years later I am still involved in that profession.

School days consist of many memories - I remember when the first radio appeared and we listened to schools programmes such as "Exploring Scotland" and "Singing Together".

For special events we were taken into the schoolhouse - one being the marriage of the late Princess Margaret to Anthony Armstrong-Jones in 1960

Annual highlights were the summer outing and prizegiving day. The annual outing for pupils, mothers and other siblings was held just before the summer holidays and included places of interest, such as Edinburgh, Portpatrick and Stranraer, and also a visit to the newly opened Prestwick Airport.

Prizegiving Day was another special occasion that brought mothers to the School. On that day the school was decorated with flowers freshly picked from the Coupers' garden and with the handwork produced by the pupils during the year. The children also recited poetry, but since this was not my strongest subject, my contribution, much to my mother's dismay, was embarrassingly brief.

The actual prizes were awarded in various categories: classwork, perfect attendance, nature study, bible knowledge and so forth and quite a few of these now rest on my bookcase shelves.

My time at Stroanfreggan was obviously a most formative period of my life. In particular my affection for Mrs Couper, a Shetlander, remained a source of inspiration. It was with these memories in mind that I visited Shetland in 2002, where Mrs Couper, who died in 1992, is still remembered with affection. She and her late husband, William, now rest in the churchyard at Voe, overlooking a bay on the west side of Shetland.

Standing on that tranquil spot, my mind reverted to the Old Testament, to the book of the prophet Daniel (Daniel 12:3), where we find these lovely words, so appropriate an epitaph for such a fine teacher :

'those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever'.

Colin McTaggart called to show friends the photo of his brothers and sisters Billy, Drew, Olivia and Yvonne at Stroanfreggan School in 1957

His grandmother, maiden name Byers, was born at Margrie near Lochinvar

His mother Annie Galloway - in photo of Dalry School 1937 - was born at Glenshimmeroch

He was born at Knocksting

His Daughter Tika was born at Craigengillan and attends Kells School

17th June 2002

My days at Clatteringsaws School by Molly Broll (nee Cole)

My teacher was Mrs Hyslop and there were five pupils, James Cole, Kenneth Cole (my brothers), Peter Kelly, Jean Kelly and myself

My most cherished memory, when I was eight years old was knitting socks for the servicemen in World War II, for the two voluntary organisations the Red Cross and WRVS. Mrs Hyslop encouraged us to send a letter about yourself and a bar of soap along with the socks.

I was fortunate enough to get replies from two people; one of which was from a Polish officer Michal Salwin in December 1940, who received the socks whilst on duty in France, we continued to keep in touch for a couple of years through letters.

When he was stationed in Edinburgh I was very privileged when he came to stay with my family for a weekend at our home Ailsa, Clatteringshaws.

The other was from an airman's wife Mrs Ireson from Wolverton, Bucks, who replied in July 1942, on behalf of her husband who received the socks whilst in Iceland. Again, we kept in contact by writing to each other.

I still have these letters and have treasured them for all these years.

To see the letters please turn over

6. XII.1940.

My Dear Little Molly,

I have received just now your socks and letter and thank you very much for them.

I am a Polish soldier from Warsaw and I am several months in Scotland

When you knitted these socks at school and when you wrote your letter (20.1.40) - I was still in France with my friends together.

We are very glad - and we like children very much, who are learning good.

Molly - you are 8 years old? And you personally knitted this socks? You are very lovely girl - and your mother and father are proud off you.

I cannot write English well - but do you understand me.

Once more thank you very much.

Best regards to you and your mother and father and brother's and whole family and your school-mistress - from the Polish soldier.

As I am in a hurry, I have only time to tell you that I am very glad to hear again from you. Don't forget me, Molly!

I remain your truly soldier

*Michal Salwin
P./29 G.P.O. Perth*

P.S. But don't send me nothing, because I have everything. Send me please a letter only. -

29, Western Road
Wolverton
Bucks
England
10/7/42

Dear Molly,

No doubt you will wonder who I am, and why I am writing to you.

Well I am writing on behalf of my husband who is an air-man stationed in Iceland, to thank you very much for the socks you knitted, you are a clever girl.

Your letter went to Iceland, and then my husband sent it back to me. He wants me to tell you, he is very pleased with them, and that they will keep him nice and warm.

I'm sure you all must be very busy and I thought I would write and let you know where your socks landed up at.

I am enclosing a Postal Order for 5/-, to be divided among the school each having 1/- each, in appreciation of what you are doing for the forces.

I remain Yours truly
(Mrs) K E Ireson