

Chapter 69

Stirling – Summer 1965

There was naturally great sadness in the family on the death of Grandma Henderson in August and her subsequent laying to rest in historic Snowdon Cemetery under the southern aspect of the crag on which Stirling Castle stands ... and to this day, I tend the tombstone where she lies with her husband, my grandfather, John (1885-1944) and daughter, Aunt Neta (1910-1982).



Then climbing up slowly,
Though sad I might be,
I'd gaze once more at sights there south-east
Of fields and the folks Bruce set free.

My thoughts blest when recalling,
Lochnabens Richardsons' brave,
Whose blood was passed on to me from my Gran,
Now peaceful in that Snowdon grave.



'Snowdon' is the original name for 'Stirling' and is a peaceful spot that belies its turbulent history. Prior to the passing of Grandma, we as a family had the joy of welcoming Cousin Mary Hope (1905, Glasgow-1988, New York) on what proved to be her final visit to us all from her home overlooking the East River in New York City. By this time Schoolhouse, Bannockburn had been demolished and Mum and Dad had been re-housed in Station Road until their move to Kilsyth where dad had been appointed Headmaster of the largest primary school in the County of Stirling.



Olive - Cameron Cunningham & Elizabeth - Cousin Alison - JH - Aunt Neta Henderson Mum with Evan JH, Ewen C. in kilt - Mary Hope w. Rhona C. - Dad w. Niall C. - 1965

And then in July, we took Evan with us to have a holiday in Shepherdswell, Kent, England



at the home of our 'bridge-playing' friends, Olive's former teaching colleague at Fallin PS, Moira Burnett, and her husband Malcolm, who had both moved South from Stirling on Malcolm's appointment as a

Customs Officer at Dover. We did the journey in two stages – overnight train from Stirling to London Euston, then London Victoria to Shepherdswell. Push chair walking along the London Embankment was an experience, albeit an unbearably noisy one, for country folk like us! Malcolm lent us his car for getting about Kent – to Dover, Deal, and also Broadstairs where we went down in the lift to the beach for a swim and sand-castling.

As usual, I had had an ulterior motive in setting up this trip down south – having been given a ‘Rover Ticket’ for Lords by my cricket captain at SCCC, Derrick Forbes, for Day One of what proved to be the final Test Match between England and South Africa until apartheid restrictions were lifted in the 1990s. I took the ‘businessmen’s train’ in the very early morning up to London, and had a wonderful day viewing the six hours of play from vantage points all round the historic ground.

Another event worth mentioning is Evan, at 13 months, having had a swing in the local play-park, was helped down from it by me and then proceeded **to toddle** to Olive about five yards away ... **unaided ... for the first time!**

On the professional front, having been appointed as an Assistant Lecturer in Physical Education at Glasgow University from the September, I started daily journeying to the city Monday to Friday to engage in various sports’ coaching activities during the alternate morning and afternoon shifts I had been allocated within the 9am to 10pm opening hours of the Stevenson PE Building just off University Avenue at 77 Oakfield Avenue.



The main facilities comprised two squash courts, a gymnasium of approximately tennis court size, beneath which there was a similarly sized swimming pool. All individual student participation was voluntary, but we also had responsibility for supervising graduate members and organising and running numerous varsity sports clubs’ indoor training sessions. My club commitment in this context became soccer and rugby.

Nothing more unlike regimented school work was what I had to get accustomed to initially ... and there were many quiet periods when hardly a soul was using our facilities, far less tapping our expertise. But it was a happy place to be around – and my fellow staff members were great, Head of Department- Graham Niven, Senior Lecturers - Fraser Riach (Scottish Javelin Champion) and Catherine Clarke, Assistants like me - Ian Douglas and Alix Jamieson (Olympic Long Jumper in Tokyo, 1964 where Mary Rand won the event) ... but the travelling from and to Stirling was a bit of a trial, boring and tiring Particularly on my late-evening Friday shift when I had to close the building at 10pm with little hope of catching the 10.30pm train - and then having to wait for the 11.15pm that got to Stirling at midnight ... where my faithful Raleigh Lenton was padlocked awaiting my exit and the half-mile cycle-run through the town and then uphill to 29 Springwood Avenue.

Ever the ‘masochist’, I turned up the ‘agony’ by taking Mr Niven’s advice to try to complete my academic BSc degree while under his command. Thus, he re-arranged my time-table to allow me to attend

daily 11am lectures and one afternoon tutorial in Higher Ordinary Statistics. This was a natural follow-on to the Ordinary degrees passes in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy (Physics) that I had gained in 1958 before opting-out to go to PE College instead. One compensation was that my train journeys became useful times for study, apart from other free time in the Stevenson Building when things were quiet. In the event, being good at mathematics, I did not find the Statistics course too difficult and did not allow my academic work to impinge on the domestic bliss at home with wee Evan and ever-supportive Olive. Come the June, 1966 final examinations, I passed and was ready for more studies the following year.

But, also, although I had resigned my officer-ship from the 8th Stirling Boys Brigade, my Dad, as President of the Stirling Battalion of the BB, asked me to join the Reserve of Officers ... so I did. His ulterior motive was to make me available during vacation periods to organise and run the PE aspects of Officer Training at the Carronvale National Training Centre in Larbert. Subsequently, I enjoyed doing this for a week in each of the next two summers – wonderful experiences of Christian fellowship and service.

Week-end rugby was still high on my priority list, and I had a season to remember when I reached my target of 1000 points in first-class rugby on the 5th of March, 1966.

Apr 27 W.O.S. Auldhouse 0-11 - Y
1st XV Final Run

Date	Opponents 1965/66	F	A	
1940 Sept. 4	Keil O.B.	H 26	0	11
2P .. 11	Allan Glen's F.P.	A 15	0	6
1P2C .. 18	Howe of Fife	H 22	3	7
2P .. 25	Aberdeen Gram. F.P.	H 6	3	6
2P1C Oct. 2	Boroughmuir F.P.	A 14	3	8
30 Sept 18	Bearden	53	0	14
7C 1P1C	9 Gordonians	A 11	3	5
1P2C	16 Kilmarnock	A 24	6	9
68 1P1C	23 Perthshire Accies	A 23	3	5
58 2P1C	30 Dunfermline	H 22	6	10
46 Nov. 6	Trinity Accies.	A 12	12	12 93
42 .. 13	Gordonians	H 16	3	4 97
.. 20	Perthshire Accies	A C F F		
.. 27	Hutchieson Gram. F.P.	A O F F		
Dec. 4	Aberdeen University	A INTER CITY		
.. 11	Greenock Wanderers	A UNAVAILABLE		
22 .. 18	Trinity Accies. 2P, 2P, 4C	H 31	0	20 117
.. 25	Greenock Wanderers	H X F F		
19 Jan. 1P 3	Ayr	A 12	3	3 110
17 .. 8	Hawick	A 8	9	2 122
10 .. 15	Dundee XV (am)	F 10	0	7 129
.. 22	Glasgow Accies.	H X	X	
.. 29	Aberdeen Grammar F.P.	A X	X	
5 Feb. 1P 5	Glasgow H.S.F.P.	H 20	14	5 134
.. 12	West of Scotland	A X	X	
.. 19	Langholm	H X	X	
3 .. 26	St. Andrew's University	A 11	0	2 141
+2 2P Mar. 1P 2	Kelvinside Accies. 1002	A 11	0	5 158
+19 2P4C 1P 12	Allan Glen's F.P.	H 32	0	17 158
2P4C 1P 16	GREENOCK W	H 17	3	8 160
+21 1C 1P 19	Jedforest (am)	E 11	3	2 160
2P1C 2P 22	(evening) KILHARNOCK	H 23	0	8 168
2P4C 1P 26	Hillhead H.S.F.P.	A 3	5	3 171
+32 .. 30	Jordanhill Sch. F.P.	H 5	6	X
Apr. 30	Stirling County	A 36	-	84 2P4C
2P1C 31	Old Grammarians Dunbart	14	9	9 197