

Reference copy

# Invermoriston Matters



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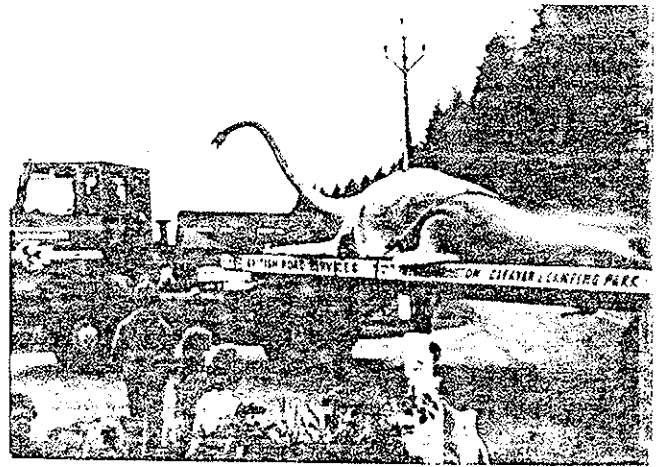
## a 'Nessie' comes home to rest

It was about high noon or so on Thursday, 14th August that the illuminated headlamp of an oncoming police motor-bike heralded the arrival at the Loch Ness Caravan and Camp Park near Invermoriston (rather than near Fort August as reported in the press) of an expertly constructed model of a Plesiosaur, the 'near-lizard' of pre-history, which oozed and slithered its progress in the muds and slimes of marine life about 200 million years ago - give or take a half-score million years or so.

The model is the brain-child of Mr Robert Lealand, owner of the Caravan and Camp Park. It is to be the centre-piece of a Loch Ness Monster Exhibition, to be gradually built up and housed on the site. 30 x 14 x 7½ feet, this 'Nessie' is made of reinforced glass fibre,

ensuring that it will 'live' for the next half-century or so. In which time surely Nessie herself will pop up one day her aged head to pay her respects. The model was scaled to measurements taken from a macroplata

PHOTO: M. GILLIES



in the British Museum, was built by a firm of specialists in Scunthorpe in Mr Lealand's native Lincoln-shire, and transported overland from there by low-loader, arousing much interest en route.

This possible replica of Nessie was scheduled to arrive at the Caravan Park at Rubha Ban at 10 o'clock in the morning.

# EDITORIAL

The main reason for being somewhat tardy in getting this issue out is that we wished to include Hamish's concert and presentation.

Once again we have decided to withhold the "Moriston Matters" Prize for Creative Writing. This prize will be awarded only for writing that in the opinion of the editor is genuinely creative and/or imaginative. Sometimes it just takes a few words or a phrase to render a story or poem genuinely creative. However, the value of the prize is increased - the 'snowball' now stands at a £3 book token. The next entry is unassigned.

Space mercifully (for the readers) forbids a longer editorial.

## NESSIE CONT.

Somewhat unfortunately it was late, for at that time that morn Loch Ness happened to be at its monster-best. It was one of these times when the water of this loch of powerful atmosphere, under an overcast sky and sunk in its rift valley bed, is hushed calm and very black. In such conditions the imagination takes over and the most fabulous of submarine life and activity in the murky depths becomes intensely believable.

Low flying supersonic aircraft reminded us briefly from time to time that, monster or no monster, we were in a technological age. But then, a slight breeze having got up, some yachts sailing noiselessly past under full sail took us back to the dawn of human history. And when the Plesiosaur did arrive, so convincing and authentic it was that the imagination was immediately re-fertilised and reinforced.

She was met by the battery of cameras usually reserved for such interesting mortals as Raquel Welsh. The onlookers flowed and ebbed, grouped and re-grouped as the truck manoeuvred its way into the park. At which feverish activity the reptile grinned monstrosously and gazed with long-necked arrogance. And it continued to view its new environment with supreme detachment even as a band of men strong and true carried her to the shores of Loch Ness to be baptized in its waters. Perhaps too Nessie herself lurked nearby, gazing too with age-old arrogance at the activities of the comparatively recent phenomenon of human behaviour.

A refreshing change, this 'model' monster, from - dare we say it? - the monstrosities of Loch Ness monsters one usually sees, the kind of 'holiday postcard' monster seen on tee-shirts, tea towels and in other less pardonable places.

We look forward to doing next summer perhaps a follow-up report on the exhibition proper.

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# HAMISH'S LAST 'ROUND'

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(WHEN THOSE ON WHOM HE CALLED FOR SO LONG CAME TO CALL ON HIM).

On August 15th, for the second time this summer, the community gathered in the Hall to show their appreciation of long service rendered to them. This time it was thirty-three years of faithful postal delivery and Hamish, along with Mollie, looking a very young "senior citizen", was the centre figure in the evening's celebration. The idea behind the evening grew from a spontaneous meeting of the people of Glenmoriston held in the Hall on July 3rd after it had become known that Hamish would retire on August 1st.

A large number of artistes sustained a varied programme under the able chairmanship of Mr Arkle Fraser - Mrs MacRae, Shona Robertson, Mrs MacLeod, Doig MacKintosh and Alastair Campbell (Fort Augustus) and Donnie (MacKay), the Highlander (Glenshiel) - songs; Fiona MacKintosh (Smithton) - dances; Mrs Cameron (Fort Augustus) - recitations; James Lennie (Fort Augustus) - piano selections; Donnie MacKenzie (Beauly) - violin and saxophone items; John Grant, Billy Calder (Fort William), Jim MacLennan (Beauly), the Highlander and Arkle himself - accordion selections. The Highlander also entertained the company with impersonations of well-known singers and with stories.

In the course of the proceedings Mr Fraser called on Mr. D. Francey of the G.P.O. Inverness - who was accompanied by his wife - and he spoke of Hamish's exemp-

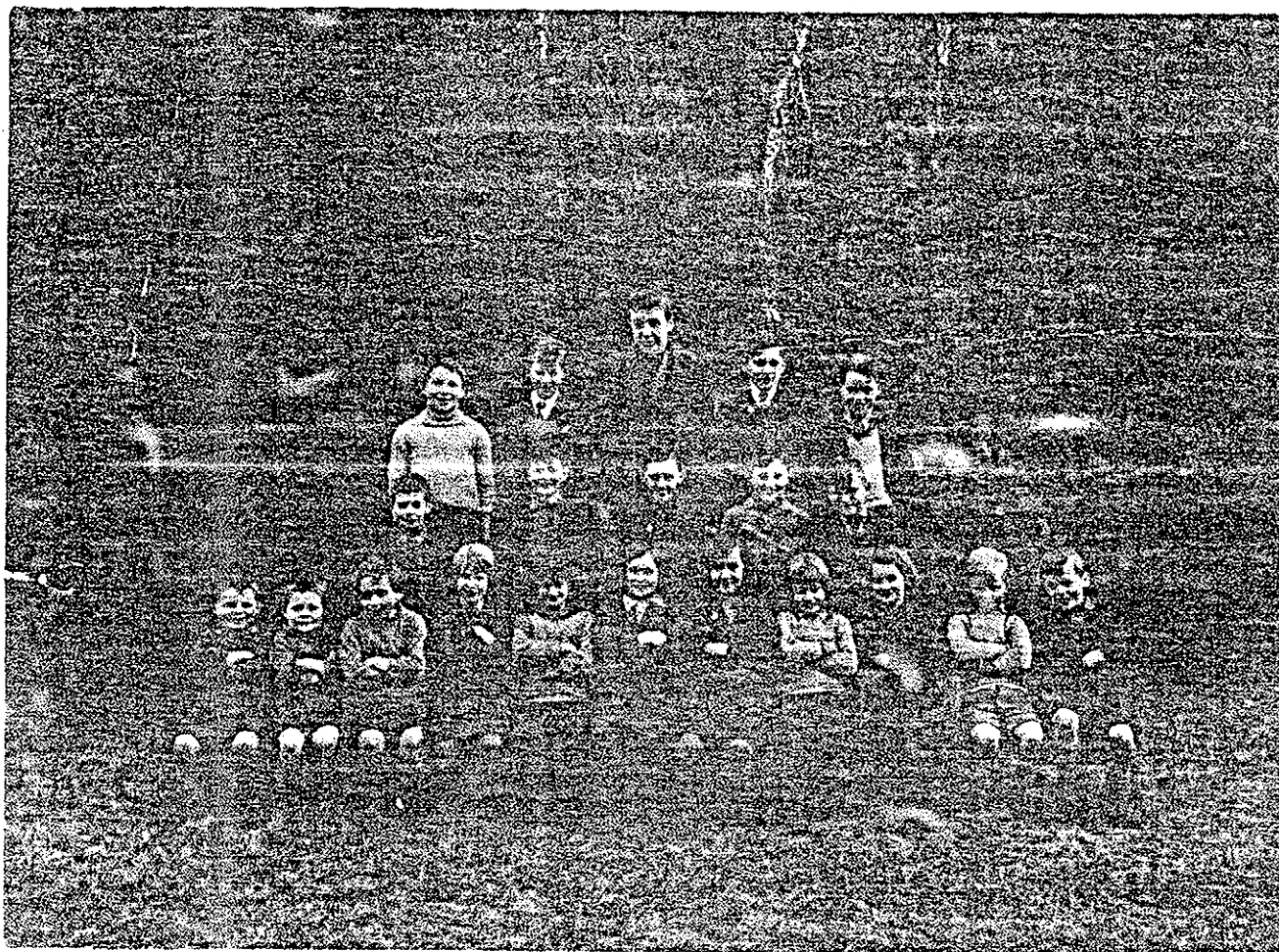
lary record of service over his thirty-three years as postman - for the first twenty-three by bicycle on the Invermoriston round and for the last ten by van as far as Cluanie. He then handed over a handsome tea-trolley with best wishes from the Post Office and a valediction signed by Mr Dennis Roberts C.B.E. amid hearty applause.

Then Mr Fraser called on the Rev. Peter Fraser to speak on behalf of the local community, not one of whom but is indebted at some time to the postman, and throughout the many changes since 1947 Hamish had brought us news, often happy, sometimes sad, and always delivered with the same courtesy and cheerfulness. He asked Mrs MacWilliams to hand over the gifts - two armchairs and a gold wrist watch - and in making the presentation Bessie wished Hamish and Mollie many happy years to enjoy them. These wishes were warmly endorsed by all present. Hamish, in reply, expressed his heartfelt thanks and said how much he had enjoyed his work.

Then tea was served by a band of ladies, and when all were satisfied the programme continued with dancing interspersed with the other items. At about 1 a.m. the party came to an end with the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow" and "Auld Lang Syne" and the people dispersed after yet one more memorable evening in the Hall.

M.E.F.

# HAMISH AND ?



A study of Hamish as a youngster, along with...well, we'll leave readers to identify the others.

In an interview with "Moriston Matters" Mr Duncan Francey, Head Postmaster of Inverness, said that Hamish had been very popular with his customers. He had only once been late for work - this was about three years ago when a power cut stopped his electric alarm clock and he slept in. Although he was excused on that occasion the incident was hardly noticed. Most people felt that he had been chatting his customers more than usual that day.

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"Moriston Matters" would like to take this opportunity of adding their best wishes for future health and happiness to Hamish and Mollie.

THE SMITHY FOLK.



PHOTO - BILL OWEN

# THE SMITHY FOLK

## PART I

Near the well associated with Saint Columba, close to the Village Hall with its immemorial bark-carved beech and a fairly venerable ash, just across from the Falls Wood with its well-trodden path, its gazebo overlooking the Falls of the Moriston and salmon ladder, and just up from the old Wade bridge, where the Falls begin, lies the building (now Allan Nairn's Pottery)

dwarfed physically now as then by a pair of age-old oaks. To this hub of a bygone agrarian age, built perhaps about the 1860's, came, perhaps within the decade following the turn of this century, the Smithy folk. They migrated to Invermoriston from Lagganbane, up the Glen, replacing at the Smiddy and the old Smithy Cottage members of their own clan of MacDonalds, some of the descendants of whom are still alive in Invergarry. Among the many things Willie told the young boys often drawn to the smiddy, fascinated by the activities that took place around the anvil, was that as a boy he remembered being taken down the Glen in a "barrow". The "barrow" was probably a hand-cart, used to transport belongings and bairns on the occasions when old Highland families moved into a new country for one reason or another.

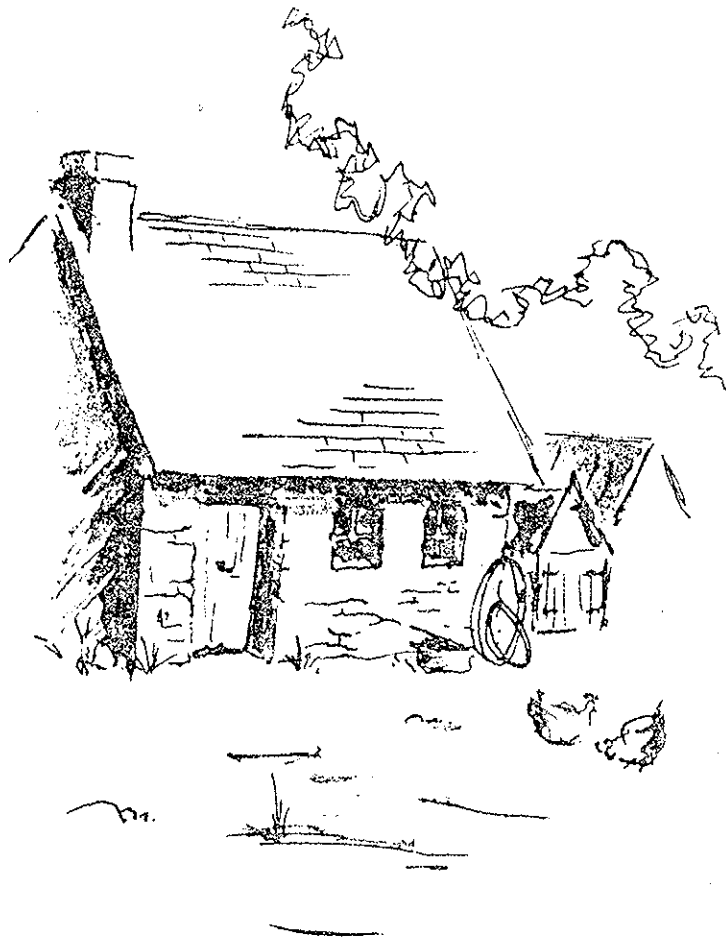
The following article on the Smithy folk was kindly provided by Mrs Christina Strachan:

One wonders how many people now resident in Glenmoriston can remember the Macdonalds, Smithy Cottage.

Surely, they were unique. Their own special kindness and courtesy to all whom they met and their neighbourliness to all those around them was an example to us all. Tourists who visited the Old Bridge and the Smithy on coach trips when such holidays were very much in vogue still come back to the village hoping to see Willie the Smith and his brother Duncan, who, although older than Willie, was the

It was Duncan who, as the trainee, passed the nails and hammer and shoes to Willie while the horses were being shod. On a fair day all this took place outdoors with the horse tied to a hitching ring at the Smiddy door. But in bad weather the scene shifted into the Smiddy itself. It was necessary to have most of the day free if one was taking a horse to be shod, because Willie and Duncan were very thorough and speed was not their "forte".

Jessie and Jeannie, the two sisters, kept house for their brothers and as the brothers had in the Smiddy, so the ladies each had their own special indoor tasks. Jeannie was the cook and Jessie the chambermaid with the door brasses her particular baby! Jeannie also looked after the "books" and rendered accounts to all the customers. Her handwritten accounts were amazing. The writing was extremely difficult to read and at the end of the line there would sometimes be a cryptic message such as "gratis" or "in lieu", but it was not always clear why something was "in lieu" or what it was "in lieu" of!



The Smiddy, Invermoriston.

A sketch by Mrs Clare Grant.

*C. Grant.*

The payment of accounts generally took place on the same day as the annual payment of rents to the Glenmoriston Estates. On such an important day, Jeannie was very busy bustling around dispensing Highland Hospitality and receipting accounts and was often heard to remark, "Oh well indeed, and how would you like to be a master farrier's clerk!"

The first break in the family came in November 1965 when Jessie, who was the eldest, passed away at home. In March of 1970, Duncan who was a very staunch old soldier finally succumbed to an illness which he refused to admit he had. Then on Christmas Eve 1974, Jeannie died quietly

and peacefully while attending Midnight Mass in her beloved Abbey Church. Three weeks later Willie, who was the youngest of the family, died in the Royal Infirmary in Inverness.

Their passing has left a great void in Glenmoriston. However, up at Clachan Merchard in the peace of that truly lovely place we can visit their graves and pause a while to remember them. It would be impossible for those of us who were privileged to know them ever to forget them.

CHRISTINA STRACHAN.

# The Moriston Matters

## prize for young reportage

### DUTCH VISIT.

During the week commencing Sunday, June the 1st, 48 Glenurquhart Secondary pupils plus 4 teachers took part in an excursion to the Netherlands. Our travelling and daily visits to places of interest were all arranged by S.E.T.A. (The Scottish Educational Travel Association). We had a very early start on Sunday morning - 4.00 a.m! Many of us saw little of the scenery on our way down to Hull, where at 5.00 p.m. we embarked on our North Sea Ferry over the sea to Rotterdam, Europort. Our crossing over to Rotterdam was smooth, but another early start on Monday morning took most of us quite unawares. We had all of Monday afternoon and Tuesday in our 'base', a lovely town called Valkenburg.

On Wednesday we went into Germany and visited Bonn, Cologne (or Koln) and went for a most relaxing cruise up the River Rhine, past pretty little villages, castles, vineyards

and barges, up to a tiny village where we visited the oldest wine cellars in Germany. There we all received a sparkling glass of either Red or White wine. Grape-juice was also available. Thursday morning was free to us to do as we pleased in Valkenburg, which is definitely not a boring place. It has two grottos, a ruin, an amusement park and many sports facilities. We visited the Rotspark, as the amusement park is called, on Thursday afternoon.

Apart from Friday morning we spent the rest of our time coming home. We could all have done with another few weeks, months even, among the abundance of rabbits, historical places and beauty spots. In the Netherlands even the largest of towns are most picturesque. I personally think it is a healthier, and more satisfying place in which to live, than Britain. Yes, even than Glenmoriston, which I'm sure many of us find difficult to believe!!

### AND SPECIAL PRIZES TO THE FOLLOWING:

We went to the Pottery and we made things out of clay. All the school was there. I was there, Amanda was there, Gary was there, and I made a car with clay. The clay was cold, and we had tools to make things with clay. And I made a lot of flat things.

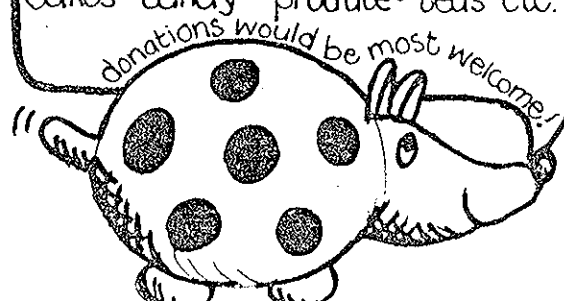
CALUM (6).

I have made a jam jar at the pottery, and a ball. The clay was softer than a bird. I made a mushroom. After a time we stopped.

AMANDA (6)

E.W.

do come to our  
fund raising sale  
at Invermoriston school  
on Fri. Sept. 26 at 7pm  
cakes - candy - produce - teas etc.





# churches

FROM THE REV. F. B. BUELL.

It was just after 12 noon, Tuesday May 22nd when we drew up from our two year stay in Edinburgh, to commence a new way of life in Glenurquhart-Glenmoriston. The sun was shining(!) and continued to do so until all our belongings were disgorged from the van onto the lawn and from there put into the Manse here in Drumnadrochit. We lived, or rather "camped" beside our things in the house until gradually order began to emerge from the chaos. On the 27th of May I was lavishly and warmly inducted into the linked parish of Glenurquhart-Glenmoriston. (I shall always remember with pleasure the rousing and bright song which the Glenmoriston Singers sang that night.) On the first day of June - another day of magnificent sunshine - I was "preached in" by the Rev. James Philip from Holyrood Abbey Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. There was quite a good turn-out at both Invermoriston and Drumnadrochit that day.

We were beginning to get organised bit by bit. Susan and Helen, our two younger daughters, had begun to settle for the last month of school here in Drumnadrochit. We were thinking more in terms of getting out to call on folk in the two Glens. Then tragedy struck! Our eight year old 1300 Morris, which had a natural "gurn-sound" when it ran, suddenly developed a siren-like scream one Tuesday afternoon on our way to do hospital visitation in Inverness. The man who knows said that the idler-gear had gone. (The car had an automatic transmission.) What was needed was a transmission unit transplant. To make a long story short, the old Morris has gone where all old cars go and in its place we now have a new Ford for which we cannot be thankful

enough. With considerable driving to do, I am relieved to have reliable transportation, and hope to get around to see you in time.

And speaking of getting around to see you, brings me to say how very much I have appreciated being taken by the Rev. Peter Fraser in his car and being guided by him and Mrs Fraser up the Glen to some of your homes and to take in the magnificent scenery from both valley and mountain top.

These are still days of beginnings for us. We trust, however, that as time passes we shall become friends and learn much from each other.

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The Free Church of Glenmoriston had their Communion Season from 7th August to 11th.

The services on Thursday were conducted by Rev. D. S. Mackenzie, M.A., Maryburgh, well known in this area, a welcome Gospel messenger. Friday evening service was omitted for this occasion owing to the absence of the minister. On Saturday the service was conducted by Rev. H. G. Mackay, M.A.B.D., senior minister of Fortrose and Killlearnan, now retired and living in Dingwall. Rev. H. G. Mackay also preached on Sabbath and Monday.

Representatives from the three congregations attended the services. Friends from Wick, Inverness, Glenurquhart and Fort William also were present. Hospitality was given in the Manse and good fellowship was enjoyed by all in Church and Manse. Able assistance was given to Mrs Fraser in the Manse by Miss M. Fraser, the minister's sister, and also by Mrs Mackay, the preacher's lady.

Mr. D. J. Smart, Mr MacDonal (Fort William) and Mr. J. Fraser (Drumnadrochit) led the praise. All services were greatly enjoyed.

Such sorrow was expressed regarding the absence of the minister due to accident. The preachers and congregation gave thanks that his life was spared and also for a measure of recovery, praying he may soon be fully restored to health and activity.

M.E.F. (FREE CHURCH  
MANSE).

## **COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The first Open Meeting of the Community Council of Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston to be held in Glenmoriston Hall - on Monday, 23rd June - produced five members of the public - an increase on the number attending any such meeting in Fort Augustus. The business was handled very competently by Mr Sherriffs in the chair and Mr Everett, Secretary.

The first item concerned the fence on the left as one drives out of Riverside Park, where, at a certain point, the posts appear in line and obscure any traffic coming down the Glen. It was reported that the Safety Officer had agreed that this constituted a hazard and the District Council would reposition the fence without significant loss to the playing field. This led to various other road matters being aired. The footpath which has been asked for for so long from the shop to the Pier may soon be provided as far as Bridgend; the winter grit still lying on the footpath to Riverside, the uncut verges and other unsatisfactory points made the reappointment of a local roadman seem desirable, and the secretary agreed to look into this.

Inchnacardoch Bay now belongs to the Community Council and is available for use by the public.

The next item concerned problems in the Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus, now handed over to the District Council, and how the users can best have their needs

met by that body. One was left with the feeling that the situation in Glenmoriston, where the Hall still belongs to the people, has something to be said for it, for although there is the responsibility of looking after it (and of finding the necessary money first of all) there is also the possibility of making arrangements to suit ourselves.

It was reported that a site for Sheltered Housing has been selected at Abertarff Place and the scheme has reached the Architect stage, but building is unlikely to be begun before 1983 or finished before 1985. The meeting was assured, however, that having reached this stage the scheme would go on.

At a recent meeting, reported elsewhere in this issue, the Dr. Buchanan Memorial Fund had been wound up, and the meeting expressed its thanks to the Committee for the accomplishment of their task.

In a letter from the Department of Health & Social Security it was stated that about 25% of the people entitled to the various benefits offered were not taking advantage of them, and the Council were invited to arrange a meeting when a speaker could come and explain things so that the Council members would then be in a position to advise people of what was applicable to them.

Mr Woolley, on behalf of the Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Swimming Club, asked for a small grant to enable the Club to keep going through the summer months. On Friday evenings the Club travels to Fort William or Inverness for a session at the Baths during which tuition is given. Adults pay £1.50 and children £1.20 plus admission to the Baths. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. With the coming of summer evenings and activities the attendances had been falling and not providing enough to pay the

transport, and so as the Club was just in its infancy and struggling to establish itself and as it was felt to be fulfilling a very useful purpose the meeting voted it a grant of £30.

The next meeting was fixed for Tuesday, 26th August at 7.30 p.m. in Fort Augustus School, but will not be an open one. Nevertheless, it is hoped to be able to give an account of it in due course both for the information of the public and to enable them to contribute their ideas to the deliberations as appropriate.

M.E.F.

## Schools

### INVERMORISTON.

Prior to the school sports which were held on Tuesday, 24th June, a small ceremony was held at Riverside Park at which Mr Ian Grant formally handed over the playing field to the community. A short prayer of dedication was offered by the Rev. Peter Fraser. This was the first occasion on which the field had been used for school sports, and our thanks go to George Swan who put in an enormous effort at the last minute to cut the grass on the running track, as the Parks Department had been unable to do this in time because of damage done to some of their machines.

Tea was served after the sports and prizes awarded to the competitors.

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The school prize-giving took place on Monday 30th June and was attended by a good number of parents and friends. A special welcome was extended to Mr James Grant of Glenmoriston and the Rev. and Mrs Buell.

### SPORTS.

On the 24th June, Invermoriston School held their annual school sports. As it was the first time that the playpark field was to be used for anything such as sports, Mr Ian Grant opened it by saying a few words, and then Mr Fraser said a short prayer.

Then the sports began with the High Jump, which everyone did. Then there were Flat races, which everybody did. The Doggie race was done by Primaries 1 and 2, and Primaries 3, 4 and 7 took part in the Skipping race.

Everyone took part in the Potato and Spoon race. Then there was the pre-school children's race, followed by the Sack, Backwards and Three-legged races, which all did. The Mothers' race followed; then the Long Distance race for Primary 7. And lastly the Obstacle race, in which everybody took part. After that there was tea served in the school, during which Mrs Nicholson told us who the Cup and Shield went to. They went to Kirsteen Douglas and Catherine Steele respectively, and there was a special prize that went to Mrs Johnson and Mrs Nairn for winning the mothers' race.

### KIRSTEEN

The residents of Riverside Park are very grateful to Allan Anderson, Inchnacardoch Hotel, for his kind gift of a lawnmower. George Swan is going to be in charge of grass-cutting and Willie Robertson repairs and maintenance. We only hope it's going for next year's grass Willie!

S.L.R.

Following a programme of music and verse performed by the children, prizes were presented by Mrs Buell, and once again a magnificent tea was served by Mrs Meggie Stoddart and Mrs Kate Stoddart.

Our thanks to everyone who showed their interest and support by attending these school events.

School will resume after the holidays on Wednesday, 20th August at 9.30 a.m.

M.L.N.

PRIZE LIST.

General Excellence

Alan McLean, P.4  
Kirsteen Douglas, P.7

Merit

Calum McLean, P.1  
Amanda Gordon, P.2.  
Catherine Steele, P.3  
Brodie Nairn, P.3.  
Yvonne Service, P.6  
Gary Robertson, P.7  
Cameron Johnson, P.7

Rev. Peter Fraser's Prize for Religious Knowledge - Cameron Johnson.

R.S.P.C.A. Essay Prize - Yvonne Service.

Art and Craft - Gary Robertson.

Glenmoriston Memorial Prize - Kirsteen Douglas.

Stoddart Trophy for Infants - Calum McLean.

Peter MacMillan Memorial Shield for Junior Sports Champion - Catherine Steele

Senior Sports Champion - Kirsteen Douglas.

SCHOOL TRIP.

On the 20th June, Invermoriston School went on a school trip. We went to the Police Station in Fort William. I got a go in the snow-trac. The police have a mountain rescue team which has radios, ice-axes, rope and a snow-trac. After the Police Station we went to the West Highland Museum, which was very interesting. We all had some lunch, and then shopping time! At 4.15 we set off for home. I give my great thanks to Mrs Nicholson for organising a great day.

CAMERON JOHNSON.

SCHOOL SALE.

On 13th June Dalchreichart School held a sale in aid of school funds. We had many contributions sent beforehand and many women brought baking just before 2 o'clock, which was when the sale opened. Admission, including tea, cost 25p. We had eight stalls altogether, consisting of toys, food, baking, clothes, white elephant, plants, books and jewellery. I was on the food stall, which included packeted foods and rhubarb. All children were given free orange juice and biscuits. Altogether we raised £130.15 and we are very grateful to all who contributed or helped in any way.

JUDITH WATSON.

The Cancer Research Fund benefited by £79.70 as a result of a house-to-house collection in Glenmoriston. Many thanks to all contributors who gave so generously.

Dalchreichart School went to Drumadrochit when they were asked to take part in their concert and play. The Cooper of Fife the same as they did at Mr Fraser's concert. John was the Cooper, Judith was the wife.

FIONA MACADAMS.

## SCHOOLS CONT.

### DALCHREICHART.

The closing ceremony took place on Tuesday, 1st July in the company of a goodly number of parents and friends. This year rain did not 'stop play', and the sports cup, kindly donated by Mr Grant of Glenmoriston, was won by Judith Watson.

The prizes were presented by Mrs. P. Fraser, Invermoriston Manse, who was presented with a gift by Jackie MacAdams.

Mr and Mrs Fraser were also given a folder of drawings and biographies of themselves which had been done by the children. Later there was a service of ice-cream, jelly, etc, for the children and tea for the adults.

Principal prize-winners and winners of special prizes included Judith Watson, John McDonell, Fiona MacAdams, Michael Smurthwaite, Marlene MacRae, Laura MacRae and Claire Tomlin.

### M.C.G.

# Moriston Matters Annual Prize for Young Civic Effort

It will be remembered that this time last year "Moriston Matters" inaugurated an annual prize for what might be called "young civic effort", and on that occasion it was decided to award the prize - record tokens - to Invermoriston School for their work in gathering litter from the road along to the school and the Manse Youth Group for theirs in cleaning up St. Columba's Well.

This year we decided to consider something which gives a lot of people a great deal of enjoyment and pleasure, and something which takes a great deal of planning, practice and endeavour to promote. This is a major school show, such as staged by

The wastepaper collection in the church shed was loaded on to the van on the morning of May 29th - about 4 tonnes of it - in the record time of less than an hour, by over a dozen pairs of willing hands pressed into service from their ordinary jobs, from the school & even as their owners walked unsuspectingly along the road. This resulted in £49 for the Hall funds, making the total since the collection began ten years ago £377 for about 30 tonnes. The shed is now filling up again so please bring your old newspapers & magazines (Radio Times, Woman's Weekly etc.) in bundles tied two ways. Plastic bags and cardboard cartons are not acceptable as containers to the wastepaper merchants, but there is usually string in the shed for anyone who needs it.

Hopefully within a year, if the shed is packed so that every inch of space is used, there will be another 3½ - 4 tonnes ready for dispatch.

Fort Augustus Secondary before the summer holidays. The show was "Joseph and <sup>the</sup> Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat". We have decided to award the prize to the pupils from Invermoriston who took part in this show. We have been told, and have verified it, that they did extremely well: Caroline Grant, Colin, Donald and Ruaraidh MacDonald, Christine MacMillan, Neil and Shona Robertson, Catherine Smart and Tricia Stoddart.

A resident in Glenmoriston, who wishes to remain anonymous, has very kindly given a handsome donation to our funds for this specific prize. We thank the donor very much.

Hamish the Post was born at Levishie Cottage, son of Peter Mac-Millan and his wife, Margaret who belonged to Inverness. The Mac-Millans were an Achnaconeran family for several generations. Hamish's grandfather, Duncan, the Estate keeper, was never in Inverness, finding contentment in the hills all his days, and indeed the view from the door of the old home, the farthest west of the Achnaconeran crofts, looking out up the Glen and beyond to the distant mountains would be hard to surpass. Peter followed in Duncan's footsteps and became head keeper on the Estate also, and until a few years before his death was able to tramp through the hills which he knew like the back of his hand. Peter and Margaret were a worthy couple and it was given to them to celebrate their golden wedding in 1964.

Hamish, however, took a different line and after a few years about Invermoriston he went to work during the war for the Board of Trade in the timber at Croy and elsewhere. When he became postman in 1947 he was a popular successor to Roddie Fullerton who himself had been popular on the road for many years. The Royal Mail was only part of the "news" he carried to his customers,

for the Post Office rules and regulations do not exclude the "Bush Telegraph" and many a helpful piece of local information or vital link in the village arrangements was secured through Hamish's willing co-operation. He would do anything he could to help his "customers", and once he took over the Glen round he found all sorts of additional "lines" added to his "stock-in-trade" - milk, groceries, school requisites, and many other eagerly awaited items were safely handed over.

He would also stop for a few minutes and pass the time of day - he liked to "keep them all happy" - but before spending too long he would be "bashing on" to the next house. He was knowledgeable of all the families, long standing and more recent newcomers alike, and even the dogs were his friends - he never had any trouble with them. On the two occasions when he was off work for a lengthy spell owing to illness it was with much thankfulness that the people saw him restored to health and fit for duty again, and now that he has the ordering of his time himself, we wish him many years of leisured activity with Mollie and the family.

## **S.W.R.I.**

On the 21st June members of the S.W.R.I. and friends set out at 9 a.m. from Invermoriston to Oban for their annual outing. Our first stop was in Fort William where we had morning coffee. On arriving in Oban most of the party went to the Caledonian Hotel where we had a splendid lunch which was booked by Mrs.M.Shepherd's sister - Mrs.M.MacIntyre. After lunch we all went our own ways - some

of us shopping, visiting friends, seeing the various interesting landmarks such as the Corran Halls, McCaig's Folly, the Museum, the ferries to the Outer and Inner Hebrides. We had arranged to meet the bus driven by Mr.John Martin, Fort Augustus, at 5 p.m. for our homeward journey and arrived back in Glenmoriston at 8 p.m.

C.MacD.

## JIMMY INNES

## YOUTH CLUB CAMP

A presentation was held recently in the Lovat Arms Hotel, Fort Augustus to mark the retiral of Mr J. Innes, fitter/turbine driver, Levishie Power Station.

Mr. H. R. Joyce, Generation Engineer of the Great Glen Group gave us a brief but interesting sketch of Jimmy's experience in hydro construction and generation.

Jimmy first started in hydro work on the construction side, working for Mitchells on the Glenmoriston Scheme, and eventually went on to work on the installation of the plant and associated machinery with the English Electric Co., which combined lasted a total of 10 years in hydro construction.

On the completion of the Glenmoriston Scheme in 1959 Jimmy joined the Hydro Board as a waterman in the Garry Moriston Generation Group, as it was then known and worked in this capacity for a number of years before being promoted to fitter/turbine driver in charge of Levishie Power Station, which he looked after till his retiral in June this year, a total of 31 years in hydro work.

Mr Joyce went on to present to Jimmy on behalf of the staff and workers of the Great Glen Group a shooting stick and a wallet and sum of money, also a bouquet of flowers for Mrs Innes.

Jimmy replied by giving us a good laugh in his usual jovial manner at some of the funnier incidents which happened over the past years, but said he enjoyed his time working with the Board and could recommend it to anyone.

DAVID MCADAMS.

On Friday the 13th June at 6.30 the Youth Club campers set out for our weekend in Morvich Camping Site in Kintail. We were all split into groups for each car. Bob took his car and caravan, Allan took his volkswagen and Kate took the Estate's volkswagen. We reached Morvich at about 8.30. When we arrived we got our tents up and then tried to get some sleep.

Morning arrived. Kate had an accident. She sprained her arm, so Bob took her to hospital to get it plastered. While they were away, some of us went to the shop and some went to climb one of the Five Sisters. And then Saturday night came with rain, and we went to bed early for the morning.

Soon it came near 12 o'clock when we had to leave. We got packed and on the way back we had our lunch at the Annexe at Cluanie, and it was still raining. We finally reached home at about 6 o'clock after a good weekend enjoyed by everyone.

C.T.

### WOMAN'S GUILD.

Two Scottish Nights held by the Woman's Guild were enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. On the first night there was a slide show by Bill Owen, songs by Margaret MacRae, and two young dancers - Alison Taylor and Norma Hossack from Inverness. Second night was a Comedy Thriller by the Drumnadrochit W.R.I. Ladies, greatly enjoyed by everyone, songs by Isobel Service (Invergarry) and dances by Marlene Grant.

Tea was included, providing Scottish Fare, and the Church funds benefited by over £160.

J.B.C.

## The Dr. Buchanan Memorial Fund

On Monday 9th June, there was a public meeting in the Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus, to wind up the business of the Dr. Buchanan Memorial Fund. From Glenmoriston Mr. Ian Grant, the remaining committee member - Mr Gordon Cowie having left the district at the end of the year - was present, but no members of the public (The meeting had been poorly advertised in the Glen) & so in order to complete the story of this particular chapter of events begun on that sad Sunday afternoon nearly three years ago we report the following facts, kindly supplied by Mr. Hamish Sherriffs, chairman of the meeting.

The money subscribed amounted to £1486.70 which, along with accumulated interest, reached a final total of £1647.21. After a deduction of £40 for initial press notices, the projector, the use of which many of us have already enjoyed at various functions, was bought for £600; & the remainder of the money was spent at Dr. MacRae's discretion on items of medical equipment for use in the surgery & furnishings for the comfort of the patients visiting it.

The committee who had applied themselves diligently to the difficult task of gathering & administering this fund were thanked & discharged.

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## **DARTS**

The Darts Club held an enjoyable dance in June in aid of funds. There was a good crowd of holiday makers and the usual supporters and the profit was about £50.

M. SMART.

## **in brief**

Congratulations to Una Grant on graduating M.A. at Glasgow University....

.....and to Willie Thomson on winning the Sports Championship at Fort Augustus School.

.....to Amabel, Miranda and Iona Grant who have been notching up successes at the various Pony Club events throughout the summer. Amabel won the Pathfinder's Trophy and has been chosen to represent Inverness in the Qualifying Competition for the National Pony Club Championships. and Miranda and Iona both won Jumping Cups for their age groups.

Congratulations and best wishes to Caroline Kemp and John Bennett who were married in Aberdeen on 3rd July and are now living in the Isle of Man....

.....and to Sharon Curson and Robert McNicol who were married in Invermoriston on 23rd August.

We welcome Mr. and Mrs. Kirkbright the new residents at 1 Primrose Bay.....

.....and the youngest member of the community, Ketil John, born on 15th August to Karen and Bill Bedford.....

.....and we wish Reg Curson well as he takes over as the new postman.

Some of her old friends in Riverside were delighted recently to have a visit from Mrs Haig Stuart who was looking very well.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Robin Mackie who has returned to Leven where we wish him all the best.

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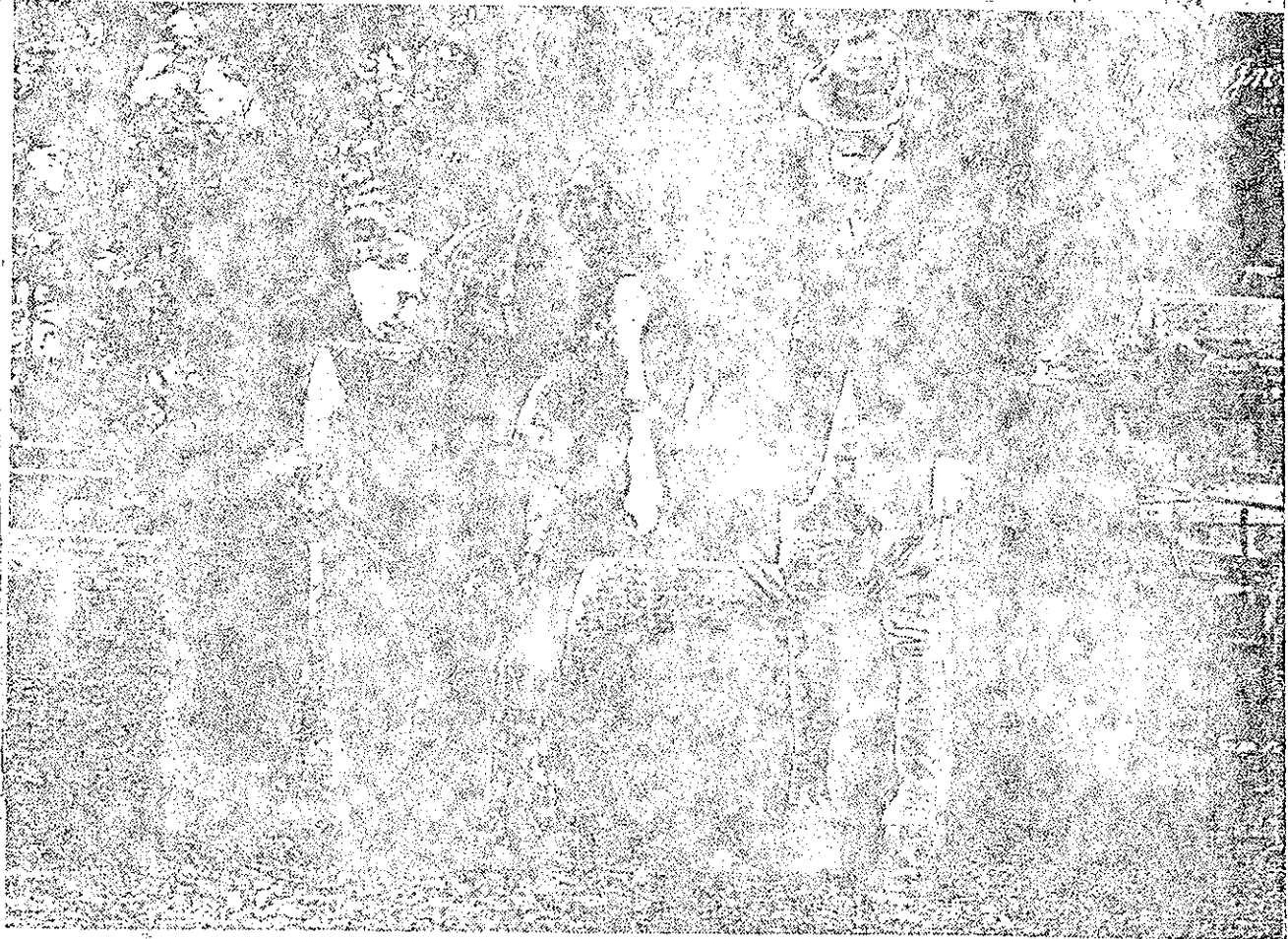
Arrangements were made to hire a bus on the night of the Alasdair Gillies Show at Eden Court and a full complement from the Glen travelled, enjoying each others' company and an excellent night's entertainment.



# THE STRATHGLASS

## PART 2

### ★ VIP interlude at a Highland smiddy



The stories which have grown and accrued over the years about Willie and Duncan, Jeannie and Jessie are legion. One of the most interesting concerns Saint Merchard, the patron saint of Glenmoriston. He was a contemporary of St. Columba.

The legend of Saint Merchard and the three bells is probably well known. Briefly, Saint Merchard and two of his missionaries were once preaching and teaching in the Strathglass area.

SBC "Tonight" reporter Fyfa Robertson breaks off his journey over the drove roads to the Isle of Skye to get a change of shoes for his mount, Merch, at the Glenmoriston Smiddy. Doing the filling are brothers Duncan (left) and Willie MacDonald.

For days on end he saw a white cow standing under a certain tree. At last he decided to dig under the tree, either on his own initiative or on being commanded to do so in a dream. He unearthed three bells (empty, some say). He gave, again either on his own initiative or through the medium of a dream, a bell to each of his three missionaries, instructing them to wander abroad and wherever a bell rang for the third time to build a church. One missionary travelled east and when his bell rang for the third time in Glenconvinth, near Kiltarnity, he built a church there. The other went west and his bell rang for the third time at Broadford in Skye. St. Merchaud himself headed south and when he came to Balintarnie in Glenmoriston his bell rang for the third time. He built a church. (It is said that he also built a sanctuary on a lochan isle near Myrtle Cottage (Loch nan S'Chrois)) For many years the bell was in Clachan Mhercheud, until in about 1870 or so a man called Garrow, who was probably an agricultural labourer, took the bell and threw it into a bog or the river, to test the legend that the bell if removed would return of its own accord.

Well, years passed and Willie the Smith went to Forres to serve his apprenticeship as a blacksmith. While there he came across Garrow, who was by then an old man. When Willie returned to Invermoriston on holiday he told the people about his meeting with Garrow. Whereupon the village elders gave Willie money to treat Garrow to a drink and asked him to find out where he had thrown the bell. But by the time Willie got back to Forres Garrow had died. (There is a Garrow's Garage in Forres still).

We have referred to the powerful magnet the old smiddy was to young boys. Perhaps the writer of this will be allowed to indulge in a little reminiscence on a time when he was such a young boy in the immediate post-war years. This concerns the times when the young boy paid a visit to the smiddy for once under some duress because it was ordained that he take part in a ritual.

To start at the beginning. Willie the Smith was then, as so many other worthy personages of the time were, an amateur barber. Now, he was as thorough at cutting hair as he was at shoeing a horse. The whole operation took a long time. It was especially long when it took place during the long hot summers, which occurred then, it seems now, with tidal regularity. It was even more especially long then because Willie fervently believed that young boys should have a special kind of haircut for the long hot summer months of the then long summer holidays. He would scrupulously make sure that you were left with a respectable dossan. The rest of the head was a different matter. That part of the head which began where the dossan sprouted and ended about two inches over the crown was given semi-semi-crew treatment. From where that section ended to above the ears, the sides of the neck and the nape, was shorn to scalp level. And what of your head was still visible above the collar emerged from the smiddy as if it had been clean shaven. Though Willie did not use a razor. It was all done by scissors and clipper (what he called "the machine"). So you can imagine the pressure on your head, held by Willie at times as if it were in his vice, to achieve this combination of skinhead and Yul Brynner effect. People said Willie placed a bowl over the head to ensure accuracy.

But this was not true - the undeniable accuracy was the result of meticulous thoroughness.

So it would come to pass that you were placed on a box on the floor of the smiddy. You were tucked in and the box of main instruments and accessories produced. The first part of the operation wasn't too bad, for while Willie did the dössan you were positioned so that you were looking out into the outside world of a hot summer's day. But that did not last long, the major part was to come, and for that you were turned so that your back was to the light of the door. You stared and stared at horse-shoes, nails, lengths of chain, coils of wire, bolts, screws, pins, parts of ploughs, harrows, reapers, spades, shovels, graips, mattocks, rakes, axe-heads, saw-blades, hinges, shafts and a whole range of indeterminate pieces of metal and machinery. Local worthies would call in to pass the time of day, and the various exchanges would delay the hair-cutting. Of these callers, inevitably one was a gentleman in a pair of "wayward plus fours" who would complicate matters terribly, suggesting to Willie, for example, that your haircut when it was still far from finished "would do". People would come with parts of implements to be repaired or altered and while Willie got what was required exactly right the hair-cutting was set aside. Now Jeannie comes to throw scraps to the hens. She would engage you in reluctant conversation. Her questions about the health and welfare of the members of your immediate and wider family were searching and exhaustive. Then someone "taking the road" would attract the attention of Willie and/or Duncan, which would trigger off seemingly endless debate and discussion. There was the question of identity first of all - who could it be,

who was taking the road? That eventually established, the question of destination was examined - Where could so and so be going today? And that deduced probable motives were probed - Why was so and so going there today?

Nevertheless, surely though slowly the hair-cutting was being done. But then calamity of calamities! Willie's "machine" began to play up. You knew it when it began to stick in your hair and he had to work it free. The discomfort was bearable at first - at any rate, better some discomfort than a major breakdown. But when the "machine" began to wrench whole tufts from your scalp you had a sinking feeling that the operation was going to be a very prolonged one. You were right. Willie would cease and retreat to his bench. Time passed, oh so slowly, while you strove to stay, statue-like or like a gymnast frozen in mid-

exercise, in the latest position he had twisted you into. But flesh and blood weakened - you sneaked a look over your shoulder. The "machine" had been completely stripped; there on the bench were strewn all the parts that were once the intricate whole of a clipper. When Willie - eventually - located the fault and began to reassemble it you noticed he was applying to it a pungent, unappetizing, very thick grease.

But at long last the cloth you had been tucked into was removed and shaken. What a profound heave of relief you breathed! But you always forgot that the precision scissors work was still to come. The cloth was replaced. At first the scissors snip-snipped quite fluently. But the process was gradually slowing to a snip and a snip until it became a case of Willie snipping once, stepping back to view your head from a distance and from

all angles, stepping forward to snip once, and so on.

But the operation did come to an end. And as you made ready to bolt, having handed over your half-crown, he would say, "Now boyan, be sure and wash your head in cold water".

So you were free again. Ah, not quite. There was still this business of washing your head in cold water. You went home to Rose Cottage. Did you have to wash your head in cold water? Yes, said Aunt Kate. Yes, said Uncle Alivick. And yes, said Donald Fraser. There was nothing else for it. There was a stroup projecting from a dry-stane wall in the garden of Rose Cottage. You let the water splash over your head. Now you were free. The ritual had been completed.

And the sun-hot evening of a hot summer day soon dried the little hair Willie had left you with.

As we have said there are many, many stories about the Smithy folk. This one illustrates their old-world virtues. A young person of Invermoriston happened once to lose some money. It was found by Willie and Duncan while on their way to an interment in

the cemetery, and of course the young person got the money back safely. Her mother insisted that she go to the Smiddy to thank them for their honesty. She was solemnly told by them that they were taught as a family to be honest from the age of six, and furthermore, they had been able to find the money because they were on their way to attend a funeral and were therefore looking down at the ground.

One remembers the kindness, the obligingness of the Smithy folk, and their very genuine interest in the families of the Glen as they were born, grew up, went away, came back. But they were characters. Perhaps we may let such a doughty warrior as Jeannie have a last word. There was one occasion after a function, in the hall or wherever, when Jeannie was unable for once to give an acquaintance the benefit of her usual powers of observation. This was because, she stressed, they, the Smiths, weren't among the "ordinary five-eighths" at the function, they were "at the top table" along with "the other aristocracy". Aristocrats of a kind perhaps they were. R.I.P.

#### INVERMORISTON SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH - 1934.

##### Back Row Left to Right.

Donald Fraser (The Pole), Jack MacKenzie (Schoolhouse), Maaiish MacMillan, Harry MacDonell (Port Clair), Tony MacDonald (Police Station).

##### Middle Row.

Jimmy Steele, Jackie MacDonald (The Pier), Willie MacKenzie (The Street), Stanley Grant (Creaghnamo) and Pat MacDonald.

##### Front Row.

Andrew, John, May and Jessie Fraser (The Pole), Isabel MacKenzie (Schoolhouse), Patsy MacDonald (Police Station), Harry MacDonell (Port Clair), Flora Marshall (The Pier), Ella MacDonald (Police Station), Tina Grant (Creaghnamo) and Patsy MacKenzie (Street).