

We Bremners are deeply indebted to Dave Carr for supplying so much valuable information about our family background which would have remained obscure but for his painstaking efforts. As my parents died when I was young I knew little of their past lives. Michael and Gavin have had Bertha and myself around for a longer period and so know more about us. They may well not want to have any more facts about our lives than already mentioned in 'The History', yet, and partly for my own amusement, I feel constrained to attempt to fill in such details as a poor memory can muster. I have always been vague regarding dates, even having to verify the birthdays of my sons when called upon to quote them. So, the other day, I attempted to rough out the plan of my life as the years have passed, up to this year of grace, nineteen hundred and seventy-seven, when on June 6th. I hope I shall reach the age of sixty-four. Unfortunately there is much that I cannot verify as all my uncles and aunts who could have helped are now dead. So if there are inaccuracies they must be blamed on the fact that I have no records to consult and I do not have the time or inclination to dig deep as Dave has done.

The first gap that requires to be filled is the lack of details of my Mother's family. The Jamiesons were Glasgow folk and I have heard of a dairy and delivery of milk by horse and cart. There was quite a large family. John, I knew only by name as also Watson, who I seem to remember died in Canada during the first world war. Another brother, Harry, I did know, and in very sad circumstances, for he was 'shell-shocked' in the same war and spent the rest of his life in mental hospitals; quiet, gentle, and making little response when visited often by my Mother and other s of the family. For a time he was at Woodilee Hospital close to Lenzie and I went there with my Mother frequently. The two brothers who made more of an impact upon me were Willie and Arthur.

Arthur, whose wife was named Rosie, lived in Edinburgh, and their children, my cousins, Bertie and Gretta were in my age group, Bertie a little older and Gretta, younger. Uncle Arthur was a commercial traveller for a sports outfitter firm, and he specialised in golf equipment, displaying his golf clubs and bags etc. at all the big golf championships in a marquee tent. When they built a bungalow at Corstorphine and moved there I spent some time with them while my mother helped to lay out the new garden. Uncle Arthur and Aunt Rosie were friendly, loveable and generous people. I look back with pleasure to Edinburgh visits when a conducted tour of the Zoo was always a treat and frequently we would go by tramcar into the city to meet Uncle Arthur for lunch at 'P.Ts' (Patrick Thomsons) where an orchestra played while we enjoyed a good meal. Uncle Arthur would sometimes stay with us at Lenzie when his work took him in the Glasgow direction. He never had a car and used public transport for all his travelling. When I later took up golf he was able to supply all I required, and I recall two red golf balls, for use in snow, which decorated two vases in the parlour of Ravenswood. Uncle Arthur played the cornet and when we visited Edinburgh musical evenings were the order of the day and I played piano accompaniments but had to give over to Bertie if the key did not suit his instrument. Although by this time I had made more progress with piano playing Bertie, who played a lot by ear, could transpose, a gift I always

admired. Later in life I would go to Edinburgh to attend rugby Internationals at Murrayfield. The last visit for such an occasion must have been not long before my Aunt and Uncle died. By that time I was the proud possessor of an M.G. Midget and I was accompanied by Bertha; it must have been not long before we were married.

Bertie married Catherine Wight; worked in the Civil Service as a quantity surveyor, or as a 'measurer' as it was called at first; rose to a high position and was awarded an M.B.E. which he received at Buckingham Palace. The children David and Patricia were adopted, Patricia marrying Willie Renwick and now have children, George and Paul. Greta never married and has worked all her life as secretary in an office of Law in the city. When our life took us to the East of Scotland we naturally saw more of the Edinburgh Jamiesons and did not retain such friendship with those in the Glasgow area of whom I must now give some account.

So we turn now to my Mother's other brother, Willie, a small man who waxed his moustache so that it stuck out under his nose like two black tapering needles. He was a draughtsman for a firm of ironmongers who supplied steel roofed farm buildings, and it was in the construction of these that Uncle Wille was involved. P. and R. Fleming was the name under which his company traded. He married one Barbara, who if I ever met I do not remember, for she died at or soon after the birth of their third son, Watson. There were two born before that, Henry, about the same age as myself, then John. To help with the upbringing of Watson, my Mother provided him with a home with us at Ravenswood, and he went to school there and lived as one of the family for a time. At this time Watson lives in Glasgow and has a grown-up family. He was a prisoner of war in the second war and has not too good health, probably as a result. Henry married and died at an early age, he was a banker. John too married and has family but also died in middle age having worked for a firm of granite quarriers in their Glasgow office all his working days. But, to return to Uncle Willie. I saw a lot of him both when he came to see his brother Harry in hospital and when he came when we had Watson living with us in Lenzie. At meal times we were regaled with stories connected with his work. One recurring theme, I recall, was the stupidity of a partner's son who had come into the business without having any previous training. At childrens' parties he would remove his shoes, and with bowler hat on head and cane in hand he would do a very good Charlie Chaplin act. Uncle Wille was also very strong on Temperance. Once he spoke to a gathering of The Band of Hope at nearby Auchinloch after I had entertained them by playing on my jazz drum set. He told them such useful information as how long a row of pennies would stretch if placed side by side, these totalling the sum spent on strong drink in a given period of time. Many years later, I think it was his son John who went into a pub and found Uncle Wille sampling the alcoholic liquor he had at one time been so loud in condemning.

And then, on the death of my Father, Uncle Wille joined with the lawyer John W Douglas (Bertha's Uncle), my Father's partner a Mr MacLean, my cousin David Bremner, and my Mother to look after my affairs until I was twenty-one. These met from time to time to see that I was being properly looked after and to arrange matters of finance etc., but because of the other reasons for his visits it was Uncle Wille I saw most of. I remember going to see him at Milngavie where he latterly lived, when I was sixteen, to see if it

would be in order to spend £15 on a second hand Raleigh motor cycle. Another occasion that stands out at Milngavie was the twenty-first birthday of his eldest son Henry, accompanied by much speechifying and moralising. But now we must pass on and leave Uncle Willie in whom you may have detected a self-important little man who did his best for his family and helped to manage my affairs, although Bertha would rather say, mismanage, as he had a certain amount to do with my life after school, of which we shall hear more later.

Without his wife Barbara, you may be wondering how Uncle Willie and his three boys managed, and here we meet one of my Mother's sisters Jeannie. She had never married and until her death she acted as her brother's housekeeper. A small and humble person, she did good by stealth, and I was always welcomed with affection at Milngavie where I was a frequent visitor after my Mother's death. It used to be quite an adventure for Bertha and I to set off on our bicycles from Lenzie to arrive at Milngavie in time for lunch. I was very fond of this aunt and she was a good mother to the three boys, Henry, John and Watson. At that time John had taken a liking to the weed. He used to like to listen to my piano playing and after Sunday lunch we would repair to the upstairs sitting room for this purpose. There John combined his taste for music with a forbidden cigarette, puffing the smoke up the chimney, and with a great waving of the hands to dispel the smoke when a step was heard on the stairs. At that time Henry was a great lad for the girls, yet strangely he was later in marrying than the rest of us. He was best man at our wedding but I had little or no contact with him after the war. John, I called on annually in his Glasgow office when I visited my C.A. I had little contact either with Watson, but as he travelled in connection with his job with a firm of heating engineers he used to meet Hetty in Birmingham.

And now, Aunt Aggie, my mother's elder sister, who was often at Lenzie during my childhood. She had a great love for the plays of Shakespear, had been left a widow, and had sons, Arthur, Willie and Robert known as Bob, also daughter Nancie. Although these were my cousins they were more like Aunts and Uncles due to disparity of age. After the first war Arthur and Willie were rubber planters in the Federal Malay States and during the second war were prisoners of the Japs. Bob became a dentist and practiced in Helensburgh, then retired to Rothesay where his widow Ella still lives while their only child William is with the Department of Agriculture in Dumfries. But what of Aunt Aggie? In latter years her literary appreciation was combined with a chip on the shoulder, probably acerbated by Nancy who was one of those people who just got under my skin. At the time of my Mother's death Aunt Aggie inherited a fur coat but maintained that she had also been promised the sum of one hundred pounds which she did not receive. However the astute Aunt devised a way to put this matter right. When our wedding time approached I received a letter stating that she was now giving us for a wedding present, the hundred pounds she had not received. Needless to say no cheque or cash accompanied the letter. How does one thank for nothing? I did not reply but at the wedding reception she was seen deep in conversation with my solicitor, and doubtless the subject was that elusive legacy of one hundred pounds. However there was much good in Aunt Aggie who did a good job in bringing up her family as a widow with meagre means. She occupied a large house in Buccleuch Street, Glasgow and let out rooms to augment her income. The brothers and sisters on the whole got on well together and I look back on happy times at Ravenswood when they stayed for a time.



Another great enjoyment was to go for a run in the Morris Oxford car which my Father had bought a few years before he died. It was driven by Hetty and often some of our relatives accompanied us on a run by Aberfoyle and the Trossachs. In summer the hood would be lowered and it became an open tourer. The side curtains were of celluloid and of course there was no heater, so foot muffs were taken when it was cold. Punctures were frequent and one had to be able to repair a puncture on the road with a portable vulcaniser, and petrol pumps being infrequent one carried a spare can of petrol on the running board containing two gallons of fuel. In fact most of the petrol was supplied in cans. It was some time before pumps were common. Holidays I recall; not by car, were to Whitley Bay, Douglas, Isle of Man; The Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland and St. Andrews. When my Father was alive we had been several times to the Kyles of Bute Hydropathic, at Port Bannatyne, out of Rothesay. We did return after his death but to more modest hotels, one at Craigmore which later became the annual holiday place for the Edinburgh Jamiesons. Ravenswood will always bring back happy memories and my Mother looked after me well there until the time of her death. Hetty lived for a time in Glasgow but came back during my Mother's last illness. My Mother encouraged me in Piano playing; my friends were always made welcome, and latterly I was able to do a little in return by taking over the grass cutting and rolling for croquet lawn, and of course it was no motor mower in those days. Croquet gave great pleasure to ourselves and our friends and is well worth taking up if the area of lawn is adequate. I like to think, that during the years after my Father's death until Mother died, I returned her love and care in some way by being with her and easing her loneliness, for it is my Mother I must thank for such a good and happy childhood right through my schooldays and until I started to earn my living and make my way in the world.

How I wish that I could fill in the details of my Father's life as I have done with my Mother's. As he died when I was nine or nearly that age, I remember little. Tall, heavy, handsome and fully bearded, he was an imposing figure. Bowler hatted, gold watch in left waistcoat pocket and gold chain with blood-stone seal from watch to button hole, on Sundays the bowler gave way to a 'tile hat', and this had to be carefully brushed the right way of the pile before use. Fond of walking, he would stride ahead, walking much faster than my Mother, then would sit and wait for us to make up on him. He must have been a bowler at some time because it was his bowls that were renovated and used later by my Mother. High blood pressure was spoken of and had stopped energetic gardening and may have put an end to bowling, I do not know. Nor can I give any account of his business ability which must have been considerable as the business in Glasgow, James Bremner and Son, must have been a profitable one. Nothing seemed to worry him as the following incident, which I well remember, shows. A day's outing was planned culminating in a sail to Taverary on Loch Fyne. With us was Vi Dickson, about my own age, and we would be about six or seven. All went well until we reached Inverary. Mother had written Post-cards on board and left the steamer to post them on the pier, thinking she had plenty of time, as it had been advertised to give some time at Inverary. She set off blissfully ignorant of the fact that we were running late, and as she came back was horrified to see us sail away while the three of us leant over the rail, my Father cheerfully waving his walking-stick.



Quite unperturbed we went down to the dining room and enjoyed an excellent lunch culminating in delicious swiss tart and cream. What of my Mother? She joined a commercial traveller who had also missed the boat and hastened by hired taxi to catch the boat at Tarbert, but they were too late. They had to retrace their steps, passing Inverary, and on by the Rest and be Thankful and thence by Loch Long and the Gareloch to Glasgow, where she caught a train for Lenzie. She reached home late the same evening and what had annoyed her more than anything else was the sight of my Father as the boat sailed away, waving his stick as if everything was all right.

In Church matters he was a Manager of our Church in Lenzie but would not become an elder although asked. He enjoyed music and I think had at one time played the concertina. He always used a Hymn Book with tunes in ~~Staff~~ although I do not recall that he added much to the praise with his voice. He was regular at Sunday worship, did his bit on the Board of Management, and knelt down to say his prayers each night resting his head on his hands on a chair at the foot of the bed. Among his books were the works of Shakespeare and most of the Poets, and I remember enjoying reading the works of Edgar Allen Poe.

I still have in my possession several albums of photographs which are evidence of my Father's skill as a photographer. The large half-plate camera was mounted on a strong wooden tripod and in order to focus the camera he covered the camera and his head with a large black cloth. When this was done to his satisfaction he emerged to stand upright and prss the bulb whhich operated the shutter. The photographs range from portraits, groups, scenery, holiday scenes and these include interiors of Church buildings. My mother helped him with the developing of the heavy glass plates and with the printing. It must have been quite an undertaking in these days. When he died a photography firm purchased the camera and in return we had what was known as an 'Autographic Brownie.' This was a folding camera with a slot at the rear covered by a small spring loaded door, and in a clip a solid pencil. On taking a picture the door was opened; the title written on the backing paper of the film, and then exposed to the sun. I do not remember this ever being very effective. This camera took good pictures with its three speed shutter and gave me my first experience until I advanced to a more elaborate model in my early twenties.

My Father did not long enjoy his retirement and suffered a stroke followed by a second so that he died at Ravenswood, Lenzie 28/1/22 aged sixty four; almost sixty-five. I was not yet nine years old.

Now I come to Hetty, Henrietta Milne Bremner, as she took the family name when my Mother remarried. She was born 18/6/1900 and her father Alexander McCulloch Milne was stated to be an Ironmonger's Assistant. The marriage had taken place 17/12/1897 in the Kelvin District of Glasgow. While I have the documnets I shall complete the statistics. Hetty married William Tertius Crawford Burns in St. Columba's Pont St, London 20/2/39, and there was a divorce of the marriage on 21/5/59. Hetty died in Birmingham 11/1/75. These bare figures however cover an active life and a wide variety of experiences.

I can only go back to my early schooldays when Hetty would be in her twenties. By that time Hetty was working as a shorthand typist with a frim in Glasgow with Spanish connections. She was with this firm for many years, and on leaving was presented with a handsome canteen of cutlery. I used to visit her at the office if I was in Glasgow for a hair cut and enjoyed trying my hand at a typewriter. Her speed both with shorthand and typing was impressive and I am sure she was an excellent secretary. For a time Hetty travelled by train

daily to and from Glasgow, but later went into digs in the city, which left only my Mother and myself at Ravenswood. When my Mother became ill however, Hetty came home to look after her and remained with me for some time after her death.

It was too much to keep up Ravenswood after Mother died. I had just started work, and after a year we moved to a rented flat in Woodlands Drive in Glasgow, and I found work in the South side of the city, travelling by Subway from Hillhead to Shields Road under the river Clyde.

During her life Hetty had many male friends and several of these associations got as far as an engagement to marry that was in the end broken off. I never entered into the social life she enjoyed and after a few years I returned to Lenzie to live in dige there. Hetty then gave up the Glasgow flat and moved to London to work for a high class firm of Assayers, Johnson and Matthay, I think, was the name. She then married William Tertius Crawford Burns, known as Billy Burns, at St. Columbas Church, Pont Street, London, on 20th February, 1939 and Bertha and I were among those present at the wedding, having ourselves been married on the previous 3rd December. Billy Burns was at that time under manager of a large London cinema and was later moved to be manager of a cinema in the Erdington district of Birmingham. It was now war-time and they had rooms in a house near the cinema which I visited from time to time when on leave from the R.A.F. Unfortunately Billy had an affair with a girl connected with the cinema. I think they were together on fire-watching duties, and this led to a break-up of the marriage with final divorce on 21st May, 1959.

Hetty made many good friends in Birmingham, and although she came to Scotland for holidays on several occasions, she looked on Birmingham as her homw and eventually purchased a house in the Perry Barr area, I think in 1967, 128 Wellhead Lane Perry Barr. Here she retired among friends, the best of these being a married woman, a Scot, separated from her husband, Margaret Keatley. In her latter years she helped at a local play-school and was well loved by staff and children. In Nogenber, 1971, she bought a little dog, said to be a Jack Russel, from the Birmingham Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. She called the little black and white bitch, Penny, and it brought her great joy in her last years.

During 1974, Margaret Keatley wrote to say that she was worroed about Hetty's health. She was attending the doctor and there was some talk of surgery. After taking Gavin to Oxford in October 1974 Bertha and I parked the caravan outside Hetty's house, taking her by surprise. She was very worried about the possibility of an operation. I managed to see her doctor who was reassuring and I hiipe we left Hetty a little happier as a result. There were several visits to hospital for tests. Hetty was home for Christmas but then Margaret wrote to say she was back in hospital after a month at home. I made arrangements to go to Birmingham on MONday 13th January having phoned the hospital on the 10th, but after an investigation under anaesthetic Hetty died on Saturday the 11th January, 1975 in her 75th year.

Instead of travelling on the Monday to see her I went to conduct her cremation service and to make arrangements for sale of house and furniture etc. Hetty had lived a full life. One wonders how different it might have been if one of her early Lenzie romances had not fallen through. She was very fond of children, and it was in serving children that she found gear joy in her latter years at Perry Barr.

After payment of some legacies to friends I was left the residue of the estate. Unfortunately the house, although her property, was

'leasehold' and the owners of the land would not sell the 'Freehold' so that the value, with only a short time of lease to run, was not high. I understand that Hetty could have purchased this Freehold, but with failing health, probably failed to do so when she could. However the income was enough, added to that of the sale of our St. Andrews houses, to enable us to purchase a retirement home in Penicuik, and I am sure Hetty would have been happy to know that she had made this possible, thus ensuring that we will have a home to retire to as she herself had. Among the furnishing at Perry Barr was a round mirror and a mahogany writing desk which had been at Ravenswood, also the handsome canteen of cutlery Hetty was given on leaving the Glasgow firm she had worked for for many years. The mirror is with us; the desk, after being cared for by Margaret Keatley, is now with Gavin who had most of the cutlery as well. Penny came back here and soon settled down to life with two other larger dogs. Then, when our elderly neighbour, Mrs MacGillivray, lost her old cat, Penny went there and once again brought great joy to an old lady. Even as I write we have Penny again as her mistress in off to hospital; she must find it all a bit confusing, but happily fits in quickly to changed circumstances.

On looking over this section I see that I have omitted to mention that Hetty learned to drive a car when motoring was quite an adventure and one had to be prepared to mend a puncture on the road. My Father purchased a Morris Oxford, open four seater, the engine under a bonnet of unpainted aluminium. Hetty was our only driver and learned with one of the MacLay's of Kirkintilloch who had a garage business, and where I first worked as an apprentice motor mechanic, but by that time, after my father's death, the car had been sold. The canvas hood gave protection from rain and wind, aided by celluloid side curtains. In fine weather all of these were stowed away. The car had a self-starter which also acted as dynamo, driven by chain, and the head lamps were dipped by a lever which moved the complete lamps downward. Hetty had singing lessons and sang in a pleasant soprano voice. One of her handwork hobbies was what was known as 'pen painting.' This was done with oil paint on linen cloth, the paint being applied with a special pen nib. She also embroidered such items as tea-cloths, with designs incorporating holes which were pierced then stitched round.



During this period Hetty went South to work in Birmingham and London and I moved back to live with Mima Murray and her daughter Sheila, at Dunollie. I was now able more fully to resume my former way of life. I purchased my first car, a Swift, with magneto ignition and tow seater with an unprotected dickie seat behind. After a year or so it was changed for an M.G. The use of both cars for travel to and from work in Glasgow, and for week-end pleasure was a great thrill. On one Saturday, when out for a run with Bertha, I mistook a turning due to a misleading hedge and we ended up bumping along a disused railway track. I seem to remember vowing that I must stop driving (that was in the Swift) but I soon changed my mind. By this time Bertha was working in her Aunt's Tea Room and Gown Shop in Glasgow and our Saturday evenings became increasingly happy occasions. After a meal we would go to the Theatre Royal for the Brandon Thomas reportary Company plays before motoring back to Lenzie. Then there was the Lenzie Bohemian Club..not the least Bohemian really; I don't know where they got the name. We had dances and other evenings including drama, and I landed the job of producing a Pierrrot Show, the rehearsals taking place in my room in Dunollie. Our star comedian was Tony Turnbull and it was quite a task for me to see that we really did get some work done. Bertha's neighbour (they lived now on the South side in Lenzie) Eileen Inglis sang the Fred Astaire/Ginger Rodgers songs of the time with Tony...we had lots of fun.

Now the question of our marriage was being considered. What to do? I tried a brief spell as salesman with Fender but that didn't suit me one bit, so I started to look around for a garage business, and finally bought a small repair and hiring garage at Rhu, Dunbartonshire, and started there in 1938, living in excellent digs with a Mrs Thonson at Beechwood. Bertha had her appendix out...we became officially engaged, and were married on December 3rd, 1938, having found a little house at No 10 Cumberland Terrace, one of ten houses built originally for the officers of the Training Ship Cumberland which lay in the Gareloch. All seemed set now for life in the Motor Trade, but already the rumblings of war were being heard, and when a disillusioned Chamberlain announced that we were at war with Germany, the machinery was set in motion which would result in great changes in our lives, as indeed with so many.

We had two Austin cars for hiring with driver, and this meant that hires of an emergency nature had to be attended to by myself. This aspect of the business did not appeal to me, and on occasions I found myself driving old ladies round the Three Lochs or by the Trosachs, which our driver Mr Edwards referred to as The Tropics. He also got his spelling mixed up and spoke of 'cleaning pulgs'. Petrol sales were quite brisk, especially at week-ends when yachtsmen would fill their cans for a week-end cruise. The mechanic was kept busy and I would lend a hand if required and when he was on holiday and I had to take my share of week-end petrol pump attendance, tyre repairs etc. Then there was the matter of spare parts, and frequently this meant that we would run up to Glasgow and combine business with pleasure. Mr Fraser, a Glasgow C.A. had instructed me in the practice of book keeping and this I spent quite a bit of time on, trying to get monthly accounts out in the first days of the following month. What might have emerged if there had been no war I cannot say. I suppose I might be there still, but who is to say. The Garage certainly carries on and looks much as it was, for I passed that way a few months ago on my way to Lochgilphead to bring an elderly lady back to Bunessan from hospital.

One person who appreciated my services was Robert Reid. He had an old Austin 16 which he used only for the summer months. During the

Winer he jacked it up, removed the batteries and brought them to me to care for, and he took the cylinder head off and decarbonized and ground the valves even although it had probably only been to the South of England and back. On a Saturday afternoon he would drive out to Rhu with this or that complaint as he got his pride and joy tuned up for the annual holiday. I remember one year, he phoned me the day before the great departure to report a tapping noise in the engine....what could it be? I treated it lightly, reassuring Bob that it was probably a tappet or piston slap. Then I had qualms...supposing it was something serious! I couldn't think of their holiday being spoiled. They planned it with such care...every camping site booked. Ella knew where to stop for Devon Cream Teas...Evesham for fruit and so on. So, I got up early and went in to Helensburgh, getting there just before they left. I listened to the engine...there was nothing to worry about; and there were tears of gratitude in Ella's eyes as they took their departure.

All this time we were enjoying our first home. We took out an infernal gas geyser that took about twenty minutes to run a bath and filled the bathroom with steam, and put in a slow combustion stove in the dining room which heated the water. We grew a few vegetables. We had a few hens at the bottom of the garden, and we were very snug in our little nest and wondered why Mother McQuat had not allowed us to marry sooner.

Early in the year after our wedding we motored in our M.G. to London and changed it for an Austin Twelve, more suitable for a family car. We were also attending Hetty's wedding to Billy Burns. On our way home at Biggleswade the need for a family car receded when Bertha had a miscarriage. We had to stop at the local hotel and had kind attention from Dr Bolster. He assured us that this mishap need not prevent a family in the future, and left us with the sound advice, 'Next time pay attention to your almanack.' Next time was to be in Preston where Michael was born in Preston Royal Infirmary while I was serving in the R.A.F.

When the war started I joined the Local Defence Volunteers, later called the Home Guard. We drilled. We had lectures. We fired with .22 rifles in Gobson of Glenarn's garden, and then rifles came from America packed in Cases and preserved in grease. I was made an armourer and with my friend Charlie Stafford of the R.A.F. Experimental Establishment I had the job of dismantling these rifles and degreasing them. We had no ammunition at first, not even dummy bullets to practice loading, so I made these on the garage lathe out of solid brass rod. At night we mounted guard on the top of the Church tower, taking a flask of coffee to keep us warm, and the night Hess landed we were all called out in case more Germans paracuted in our territory. But I was growing restless and I volunteered for the R.A.F. for aero engine fitter and in September 1941 I was called up. Before I went we took bikes by rail to Mull; crossed to Tobermory, and enjoyed cycling all round the top half of Mull, little thinking then that years later we would return to live there. For a while Bertha kept the Garage going but business was dwindling so in the end it was closed. The army used it as did other organisations. We received no compensation for loss of business and when I was discharged I had to start from scratch to endeavour to build up a business once more even if it was only to sell it as in the end I did.. I did my own repairs. We did not open on Sundays. We took a half day off on Wednesday and enjoyed sailing on the Clyde in the Jeannie Deans, and gradually business built up. It was profitable but only just, and the petrol rationing still severely restricted motoring. Few new cars were available so prospects were not good. We began to think of a wee bit of land and a cottage where we could keep hens, so I

attended classes in Poultry Husbandry in Glasgow run by the West of Scotland Agriculture College with visits to Auchincruive in Ayrshire. The post-war garage days extended from my discharge in April 1946 to November 1949 when we sold the Garage and took over Knockhill Poultry Farm at Strathkinnes in Fife, about five miles from St. Andrews. During these years I had acted as organist and choirmaster at Rhu Parish Church where both my children were baptized by the Minister the Rev. Philip Lilley. I enjoyed the three manual organ although the action was a bit slow. The console had been moved at some time to a new position among the front pews and this involved a relay which slowed things up considerably. Nevertheless it was good to be able to use my music for the first time to the glory of God not to mention that the salary was welcome at that time. The move to Fife put an end to musical activity for a time and the organ shoes and music were laid aside, but before we take them out again I must retrace my steps and say something of the war years I spent in the R.A.F.

We were prepared for my call-up as I had volunteered, but not for the way it happened. I received a letter from a recruiting officer asking me to report to an office in Edinburgh for a Trade Test. I remember that he signed himself 'your obedient servant' in spite of his rank. Little did I think that I would so soon be his obedient servant. I left Rhu fully expecting to return the same evening, then to await my call. It was to be some weeks before I saw Bertha and Michael again. I survived the trade test, a sort of basic engineering V.V. and survey of past experience, but I was bitterly disappointed when the officer in charge decided that Motor Transport was my obvious place, for I wanted to work on aeroplanes. In the end they muddled things and I got what I wanted. There followed a medical examination. I was passed fit; A.1. after some delay. In spite of having drunk a glass of water at the beginning of all the tests I was quite unable to produce even a drop of urine for an important test. In the end Nature obliged. Then to my dismay I was sworn in; told to report for train to unknown destination, and all thought of Rhu was wiped from my mind. All I could do was phone home. I was an airman now and my first allegiance was ~~not~~ to King and Country and wife and child must take second place. With a batch of all sorts and conditions of men the train took me to be drilled into shape at Arbroath. We arrived late at night in the dark on the 4th September 1941, were issued with a knife, fork and spoon and a mug, and marched to a disused jute mill for a meal of heated up kippers and cocoa. Then to a hall where about two hundred of us tried to get to sleep.



Now, before leaving the Uncles, Aunts and Cousins of my early life I must enlarge somewhat on the information in 'The History,' regarding the other Bremners. These were my Aunt Maggie and her two children David and Margaret. I never knew my Uncle George who died when I was but three years old. This left his widow Margaret who we always knew as Maggie, with two children at school, both with the ability to benefit from higher education. It cannot have been easy, but Aunt Maggie managed, and both David and Margaret graduated from Glasgow University and followed up in teaching as detailed to some extent in 'the History' I seem to recall my Mother telling me that on the day Uncle George died news was received that David had won a bursary for Glasgow University. Not only was Aunt Maggie able to see that her two children had a good general education leading to Classics, she also encouraged them to engage in piano lessons and both David and Margaret became skilled musicians. Of course most of this had been accomplished before I was aware of the important part Aunt Maggie must have played in the development of her children. I shall always remember her as in the picture of page 104 of 'The History'; her hair pulled up on top of her head in a 'bun', and welcoming me in her quiet way. She seemed to have only one speed, slow and steady, but managed all she had to do in keeping the home warm and clean. And she gave one the impression that nothing would ever surprise her and that she had within her a great reserve of calm efficiency which she must have passed on in considerable degree to David and Margaret.

David first entered my life when they came as a family to spend a few days at a time with us at Ravenswood. He was of course as different to me in some ways as chalk is to cheese. His thirst for learning and his love of Latin and Greek, these I could never share. But we both enjoyed good music and his superior talent with the piano no doubt encouraged me in my efforts in that direction. We enjoyed country walks together, making paper boats to sail in streams under bridges after crossing the Spider Bridge and going to Craigen Bay. David had a great interest in Nature and a not inconsiderable knowledge of the stars, pointing out the various constellations to me after dark. Much later in life we did quite a bit of photography together, developing our films in a dark cupboard in the house at Edgehill Road, then printing them in the hall while a metronome ticked off the seconds for timing our exposures. I still possess a post card from David informing me that the time and temperature method has given the best results. (Gwen to Paul, David's grandson) 1983)

In one thing David was a failure; he tried to make me a Latin scholar but did not succeed. I would go by train from Lenzie to Queen Street station, Glasgow, then by tramcar to Edgehill Road. We would spend some time wrestling with Latin translation and it was a welcome relief when the lesson was over and we could turn to the piano instead. Then after lunch, we might play a round of Golf which was David's only sport apart from walking. It was good of him to try and I often wondered what he must have thought of my prospects in life, for education was of prime importance in his view. I was told by my Mother that when David was waiting outside the door during a game, such as hide the thimble, he would be found there with a Latin book in his hand. However, I must not give the impression of one who was dull and a bore. On the contrary, David developed a wide range of interests, and one that came fairly late in life and, I think surprised us all, was when he fell in love with Lorna and married her. I would be twenty-one years old when I was asked to be Best Man at the wedding, and never having made a speech before, the prospect was a

daunting one which nevertheless passed off happily. The marriage proved to be a happy one and when the two boys Alan and Douglas were born David became quite the family man. Later they spent happy holidays on Loch Torridon by Ben Alligin and came to love that beautiful part of Scotland very much.

I think there are some inaccuracies regarding David's teaching career in 'The History,' the main omission being as teacher in the Glasgow High School for Boys in Elmbank Street, where David had been himself a scholar. There he combined his musical gifts with his teaching. When he became an Inspector of Schools work seemed to pile up. Always a conscientious worker, David seemed to have less and less free time. I recall visiting in Aberdeen towards the end of his captive life when he could not spend all his time with us but came only for meals and perhaps a walk with the dog. It all ended very sadly when he became very confused and was forced to retire early. His last years were spent in hospital in Edinburgh where Lorna was a constant visitor, taking him for runs in the car or home for a few days. When I managed to visit him we would go together to the great hall where there was a grand piano. For a short time David would manage to play something he had loved, then he would stick at a phrase and repeat it mechanically over and over again. He would enjoy listening while I played for a bit and remark on the flowers and birds as we walked in the grounds. It was a relief from a vigil of love for Lorna when he died and the endless days of visiting were over.

Margaret shared most of David's interests. She was a first rate teacher and was much sought after to coach senior pupils after her retirement. Her ability as a pianist was also excellent, and she must have been a most sympathetic and understanding teacher as her kindness to all has ever been evident throughout her whole life. She joined with us in our indifferent golf. I seem to remember that on occasions she would try to improve my Latin when David had failed. She was a wonderful story teller and when I was young she would hold my attention as she retold the ancient tales of Greece and Rome. Like David she enjoyed those holidays at Ravenswood and before David's marriage they were great companions exploring the highlands and islands together. As with David, we were surprised when Alasdair Munro came on the scene and they were married when Margaret was over forty. Having no family of their own Margaret and Alasdair have frequently entertained Lorna's grandchildren. At Christmas gatherings a combination of tape recordings, color slides and other items have been a feature of these gatherings. Unfortunately eye trouble has curtailed Alasdair's activities since his retirement but they have enjoyed some holidays abroad together, such as cruising in the Greek Islands. The Munro hospitality has to be seen to be believed. Food in abundance and great concern that one is enjoying what is provided. Then off to bed to a warm bedroom and a bed heated to a high temperature with a combination of hot water bottle and electric blanket. And by the bedside a peeled orange, 'Just in case you wake up in the night.' And how often during a visit Margaret has to go out for a time on some errand of kindness to a neighbour in distress. Kindness, kindness, all the way.

It is at this stage that one realises that there is no end to this sort of thing. I could enlarge on the brief information in 'The History' regarding Alan and Douglas and their families. But I shall push on and leave them possibly to a supplement some other time. However I think I have given Lorna scant attention and before leaving these Bremners I shall put that right.

How Alison Lorna Kent, one 'l' in Alison, not two as in Dave's History, came to know David I cannot say, but I have a feeling that things must have moved fast once they were started. An engagement was announced and I am sure surprised many, and I was asked along to meet Lorna and her Father and Mother. Mr Kent was a walking encyclopaedia. He was a librarian and seemed to have digested the facts contained in most of the books in his care. And some of his knowledge had been applied in a practical manner in direct contrast to his son-in-law David who was purely academic. Mr Kent had fixed up what we would call hi-fy today and for good sound production had constructed a speaker with a huge baffle board. As a present to the young couple he made a substantial standard lamp carved with Greek Key and other classical designs and with a suitable vellum shade. His wife, as I look back, and after all I met them but seldom, although taller than Aunt Maggie was of somewhat similar disposition, a quiet supportive sort of person.

But what about Lorna? I found that David had chosen his bride with great good taste. Tall, elegant and charming, already qualified as a teacher, she was at once accepted eagerly into the Bremner family circle and fitted into the 'teacher' pattern of the family she was to marry into. The fact that there was at once a good friendship between Margaret and Lorna was fortunate, for as I have indicated David and Margaret were very close. Aunt Maggie was happy with her daughter-in-law and the Kents with their son-in-law, and so it continued in the years ahead.

Lorna at once set herself the task of learning to be a good wife and mother and in this she succeeded. For a time they lived at Bearsden where Bertha and I visited them. Later on we did the same when they lived at Kilmarnock and Aberdeen where the two boys Alan and Douglas attended University. Here I must resist the temptation to follow that line of thought and return to Lorna.

When David had to give up work she foresaw that he would almost certainly have to go to a hospital at some time and if that were so she would want to live near. It was to Fairmilehead on the outskirts of Edinburgh that she went, purchasing a semi-detached villa with fine views of the Pentland Hills and a small garden. Here she would bring David from hospital and he would play his Steinway and enjoy being at home. When he died Lorna made a brave decision. She decided to return to teaching and for a number of years she taught French in the Mary Erskine School for Girls. It meant hard work for like David there was only one way to do a job and that was to do it thoroughly, and this she did, first part time, and later on going for a full day. The income enabled her to run her Volkswagon and she enjoyed holidays abroad and entertained in return. At this time, now retired, Lorna is still in her house at Fairmilehead and if and when we retire to Penicuik we look forward to having her so near. Unfortunately the marriage of her doctor son Alan has broken down and recently Lorna has spent a lot of time at his home in Market Drayton helping to sort things out so that the granddaughters benefit from the best possible arrangement in the circumstances. Once again the Aunt Maggie pattern repeats itself to some extent in Lorna. There is the same unhurried air of quiet confidence and efficiency; the same measured speech, the same concern to do the best for those she loves. And now we shall leave the Bremners and Jamiesons who have all in differing ways and to varying degrees influenced my life and introduce the strange name, McQuat, for without a doubt some of that name have also made their mark, whether it be for good or ill.



We meet the name McOuat in 'The History' in connection with our marriage but that was after a long association which was referred to by The Rev. E.B. MacLure on the occasion of our wedding. Speaking in humorous vein he drew a picture of Mothers Bremner and McOuat out walking with their prams when infant Bremner sat up and took note of infant McOuat, vowing that that was the girl for him. I cannot be sure of when Bertha and I first met, but it must have been very early in my schooldays when we lived in Hawthorn Avenue, Lenzie. John McOuat operated a business in Glasgow of slaters and plasterers which meant travelling in and out by train each day. There were others in his family, some of whom I knew, but they need not concern us. John was an amiable man, tall and thin, and latterly as far as I know without teeth either natural or artificial so that there was a somewhat excessive movement of the jaw in eating. His business latterly fell on hard times and he ended his days in retirement. He was a keen bowler, travelling with his teammates to plat matches on Saturdays far and wide. And when there was ice on the Lenzie Loch he was there with his pals throwing the curling stones or 'soopin up' with his bisom. It was before the days of indoor curlink rinks and he looked forward to hard enough frost to give sufficient thickness of ice to allow a Bonspeil at ~~CARSBRECK~~ (spelling?) Another great enjoyment was going for long country walks; fifteen miles being quite normal even when retired, and he liked nothing better than a family picnic where his wife always maintained that he sat as far from the source of food as possible thus entailing much passing. And he had a great love for good music. Untrained, yet he had a natural aptitude and appreciation, taking his score to a performance of Handel's Messiah, or going to Glasgow Cathedral each week to attend a series of organ recitals. John had a great sense of humour. When he was seeing a lot of me he would say, 'The poor are always with us.' And when the time of the wedding of Jean, Bertha's elder sister approached he ~~was~~ would ask me if I wouldn't make it a double wedding although I was only ~~thirty~~ <sup>thirty</sup> three and not yet engaged.

John's wife, Bertha, was a Johnstone, her father owning a thriving Jeweller's and Silversmith's business in Glasgow and a worthy Baillie and his wife was a real character, but we must pass her by at this time. With Jean the elder sister there came later Jack the younger brother, and they lived at the top of Hawthorne Avenue in a semi-detached house, Castlehill; later moving to the other side of the railway which is in Lanarkshire not Dunbartonshire, the railway being the boundary. Mrs McOuat; I must call her that not to confuse with my wife; was a handsome woman and an excellent home maker, mother and wife. She was a good cook and baker and her knitting of socks and gloves was of a very high standard. She dressed attractively and was always immaculately turned out. Music was important in her life. She had learned to play the piano but never did much with it when I knew her. She sang well, <sup>natural soprano</sup> and loved to take the control to line in Church music and Gilbert and Sullivan opera. She always gave me a warm welcome, both as a child and later when I lived in Glasgow but still clung to Lenzie for more reasons than one as shall emerge later. The family enjoyed many holidays at Inellan where the grandparents had a large holiday house and there all the Uncles and Aunts and other relations would foregather during the summer months. It was a happy family. These were the days when they would gather round the piano at The Ferns (The Johnstone home, latterly Aunt Edith's) and practice the hymns and anthem for the evening service in Lenzie Parish Church.

On occasion there would be quite a gathering of the Johnstons at The Ferns. Grandpa Johnston, now rather deaf and to whom one spoke into a trumpet lead to his ear by flexible tubing as used in a gas iron. His wife, Gran, wearing dresses with a special opening panel at the rear so that she could scratch her back when a spasm of pain took hold of her. Always frank, she spoke her mind, as when she called the visiting Minister 'an untidy rascal' for dropping spent matches and tobacco ash from his pipe in the hearth. Aunt Edith, war widow from the First War, and who lived on at The Ferns when the old couple had died, for a number of years. Uncle Billy and his wife Cissie. He was in the family business in Glasgow; a keen tennis player but who frequently rubbed people the wrong way with his sarcastic wit. Uncle Bob, also in the jewellery business and in charge of the books, might be accompanied by his wife Julie, (she is the only one surviving as I write and still in their old home in Lenzie) And from Preston, Lancs, might be the other sister Meg with her surgeon husband Kenneth Duncan. And lastly the youngest member of the family Chic. He travelled around the country selling the jewellery firms wares and at the week-end was often to be found asleep in the sun in a deck chair. He had a great liking for Fiats and there was no other make of car to equal the Fiat in his opinion. An unhappy marriage in his case had ended in divorce.

Well, there is the family of the Johnstons, but there might also be Bertha's sister Jean and her husband Gordon Hodgson and her younger brother Jack. By the time Jack married the Ferns had passed out of Johnston hands. Gordon was in the Bank of Scotland and the two children of that union were Charlie and Betty.

Now it had been my intention to introduce Bertha at this point. But as I ramble on I realise that as far back as I can remember she has been part of my life. So, when at last I come to my own history Bertha will necessarily be associated with it and there would only be repetition if I said more about Bertha at this stage. Instead I shall fill in a bit on the details in 'The History' about my Mother and Father and my half-sister, Hetty.

Regarding my parents, as I have said, I am deeply indebted to Dave Carr for his research, and about their past there is not much I can add to what he has written. Of my Mother's first marriage to Alexander Milne I know nothing although I seem to have heard that the end came as a result of his cruelty. That she had worked in the sewing room of my Father's firm I can confirm as there is a group of the workers in an album of my Father's photographs with my Mother in a prominent position. Much later in my life it was revealed to me by Mrs Reid, Aunt Aggie, that there was a male child born before my Mother and Father were married. I understand that my Father made adequate arrangements for this child's adoption and future somewhere in the North of Scotland. Had this taken place at the present time I have no doubt that I would have had an elder brother and there is no way of knowing how that might have affected my future. As far as I know my brother was legally adopted and had no further connection with his parents although left a legacy when my Father died.

The second marriage made up for the misery of the first for my parents were devoted to one another during the years of my childhood. My Mother was an excellent housewife, manager, cook and never happier then when entertaining friends or relations. At Ravenswood she spent a lot of time on a large garden and was successful with vegetables and flowers. Cold frames were used to grow cutting of plants. A bed of tulips would be followed by bedding out plants edged with blue lobelia.

After my Father's death the same care was lavished on the grave in Cathcart Cemetry, a double lair alongside that of George Bremner. On many occasions I went there with my Mother on this errand, travelling by train and tram-car with the necessary tools and plants. Hens were added and kept at the foot of the garden giving a plentiful supply of fresh eggs. When one was required for the pot I would be sent with it to the poulterer's shop to be killed and plucked. Fruit was grown and made into jam and had it been in the days of deep-freeze we would have had peas and beans, carrots and turnips etc. all the year round. To allow for gardening my Mother had a domestic help or 'maid.' These came usually from Kirkintilloch and some were good and some bad. Some were Roman Catholics so we had fish on Fridays, and they went off on Sundays to attend Mass in Kirkintilloch. Sometimes their help was supplemented by employing a 'washerwoman' who came on Mondays and then the fire was lit under the big copper boiler in the washhouse to give adequate hot water for the big wash tubs. Towards the back door of Ravenswood there was a wing extending rearwards with a stair leading up to 'the servants quarters.' On the landing stood the mangle and I would enjoy turning the handle as the bed sheets were put through its wooden rollers. Two bedrooms and a W.C. completed this accomodation and in one room my Mother kept her treadle sewing machine for dressmaking and linen repairs. At the foot of this stair were two large cold pantries with stone shelves. No need for a fridge, they were cool in all weather. In one stood the big stone jars in which eggs were preserved in waterglass for the time when the hens were moulting. Then just by the back door and porch was a coal cellar which was filled once a year to the roof. My Mother had a friend in the Coal Trade in Glasgow and when the time came a ten ton truck of coal arrived at the siding of Lenzie Junction as the station was called, being the junction off the main Glasgow to Edinburgh line for Kirkintilloch and Aberfoyle. Then the local carter was engaged to bring the coal by horse and cart to fill the cellar. It was a whole day's job and the coal had to be carefully built up so that it would all get in. How many times the patient horse had to go back and forward to the station I cannot recall. It was good coal and made a warm house, burning both in the fireplaces of the sitting rooms and in the big gleaming, blackleggd grate in the kitchen. It was in the large kitchen that Mother's famous 'potted hough' was made. This involved shredding the meat which eventually was poured into moulds. When cold it set with a jelly consistence and it was popular, not only at home, but in great demand to raise funds for Church, School or Scout sales of work. In the afternoons, the main housework of the day over, the maid would change from her blue wrapper into a smart outfit with white cap and apron, ready to answer the door and receive callers. I remember well one disaster when friends were being entertained in the rustic wood summer house in the garden. The maid had been instructed to heat the ornamented silver tea-pot well before infusing the tea. Tjis she did by placing it over the burner of the gas cooker, and to my Mother's horror, when she went in to see to the final arrangements, there was a hole in the tea-pot about the size of a hen's egg.

Some time after my Father's death, ladies were admitted to what had until then been a male sport ormpastime, bowling. This became popular in the afternoons and many Lenzie ladies gathered on the bowling green, travelling to neighbouring greens to play matches, and even sometimes joining the men on a Saturday afternoon. My Mother enjoyed this very much and it helped a lot to cheer her after her bereavement.



June 6th 1977 has passed and with it my sixty-fourth birthday. A busy summer, has passed and now as the leaves have fallen and the bracken turned to gold I find time to return to my discourse. Much has recently taken place and it is time it was recorded. So with some diffidence I return to the history which now must concern myself, my dear wife, and family.

I was born at Lenzie in Lochgarry Lodge, one of a row of detached villas near the railway and known as The Seven Sisters. I remember little of living there after my birth on 6th June 1913 and I am uncertain of the date of our removal to Ravenswood in Hawthorn Avenue. But as my Father died in January 1922 and we had been there for a few years I should think we must have moved about the end of the war, say in 1918. I certainly remember attending the Infant class in nearby Lenzie Academy from Ravenswood and do not think I ever walked from the Seven Sisters. Ravenswood was a fine house with excellent stable buildings detached, a well stocked garden of flowers and vegetable which my Mother tended with great care and skill. The centre of the back garden was laid down in grass and made a fine croquet green where we enjoyed many a happy game with our friends.

Lenzie Academy was a first class secondary school serving Lenzie and surrounding district, some pupils coming Kirkintilloch or by train from as far away as Dullatur. The school had a fine record of scholastic achievement which I unfortunately did little to enhance. Primary school was divided among three teachers, Miss Adam, Miss Bisset and Miss MacCombie who had a fine deep Aberdonian accent, all good teachers. Up to this point I appeared to find no difficulty in coping with my lessons and at the 'Qualifying' exam passed for a language course. Henceforth Latin and French were to be my subjects when in fact technical subjects would have been much more to my liking. Maths and science suited me and I coped with English etc. but as a linguist I was a failure although some French stays in my mind to this day. The years passed with one thought ore and more filling my mind; that I should be done with school as soon as I could and find work for my hand to do.

Not that my hands had been idle, we did have two periods per week of woodwork...but I never enjoyed working with wood as much as with metal...and we had art which I never made much of. However my hands did find satisfaction on the pianoforte keyboard as I made steady progress under first Miss Gay followed by a good teacher, Miss Honeyman. As one of her more advanced pupils I was one of those who played the hall piano as pupils marched to classes or from classrooms to play or lunch or at the end of the day. As soon as I was sixteen I took my leave of Lenzie Academy and became an apprentice motor mechanic with MacLay's Garage, Kirkintilloch, a goahead business originally a blacksmiths shop, and now expanding with the increase in motoring as a means of transport.

But long before the itch to get my hands on car engines had lured me away from school at age sixteen another force was at work to influence my whole life and that in human form...female, and to me infinitely attractive form...the little girl who was to become my wife and the Mother of my children. At the top of Hawthorne Avenue in the semi-detached villa known as Castlehill lived Bertha McQuat..pupil at the same school..passing my gate every day...pupil of the same music teacher, and who I was allowed to hold in my arms when we both attended a Dancing Class conducted by Mrs Hendby of Kirkintilloch. How soon after moving to Ravenswood I met my fate, I cannot say, but our longstanding friendship was humourously referred to at our wedding reception by The Rev. E. B. MacLure who insisted that Bertha had

attracted my attention when our respective mothers wheeled us out in our prams. Seriously, I should think we must have known one another from the time I was six and Bertha four. As I write then, we must have spent a great deal of fifty-eight years of our lives together, something we should be very grateful for, especially as so many of our friends have pre-deceased us, some by many years. Which might be an appropriate time to introduce another resident of Hawthorn Avenue, a couple of years my senior living at a large villa that rejoiced with the name, La Santarita. ~~Geoffrey Muir~~ <sup>Kelvin Side Academy</sup> was my best schoolday's friend although he attended ~~Alan Glen's School~~ and later what at that time was known as Glasgoe Tec'., now Strathclyde University. Only one semidetached house removed from Bertha, Geoff was to be found devoting his leisure time with both of us although more often he would be with Bertha when I was not present. On one such occasion he accidentally put a sickle into Bertha's leg leaving a slight mark visible to this day. Geoff was a scientist; analytical chemistry was his subject, and he had a little laboratory near the back door of the house where stinks were made in the cause of science. He and I played golf together every Saturday morning, cycling to a very good golf course on the South side of Lenzie. During school holidays we played more often but after I started to work for my living I dropped golf, not enjoying playing in the evening when the course was busier. There was also a lot of fun to be enjoyed on the Muir's hard tennis court. Tennis in the season and in winter cricket and cycling round obstacle courses we constructed there. While we were thus busily engaged Bertha would be watching with envy from her garden such a short distance away. I spent a lot of time at Muir's house. Geoffrey's father was a great worker and we were called in to help in building sheds or garages which he tackled with zeal. I am happy to say that although our ways separated early in life we have been able to keep in touch and have had the great pleasure of entertaining Geoff and his wife Thelma here with his elder brother, Rex.

Lenzie was strong in youth activities with healthy groups of Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides. The three of us were all actively engaged in these and spent many happy times at the Scout Hut at Millersnuik. As I remember, Guides met on Thursdays, and near the time for their meeting to end I would be waiting on my bike to accompany Bertha home. Our friendship was growing and continues so to do with only one period when it had a setback, as far as I can remember. Of course Bertha had other friends and one I might mention here was Nancy Weir, school friend and fellow pianist, who was later to act as bridesmaid at our wedding. Nancy who lived in Kirkintilloch, was a dear girl and unfortunately did not enjoy good health although she produced two fine sons after she married Alex MacKellar, a successful accountant. Looking back on our schooldays we think of them as supremely happy and in many ways so much better than those of many children today. Making our own entertainment time passed all too quickly. Holidays slipped past; we swept the fallen leaves from the trees and made smoky bonfires; the Muirs always had a great firework display on November 5th; and we had our school parties and the wonderful annual Guides Dance. The buffet in the upper hall was beautifully laid out, the tables heavy with wobbly jellies and trifles. Annie Wilson played the piano for the games for the younger ones, then when they went home a great cheer went up as the Woodilee Band arrived to play for the dancing, and fat old Doctor Armstrong waltzed around on his flat feet, his face beaming on many of those he no doubt had brought into the world in their homes.....But I must get back to work...off at 7.30 A.M. to cycle to Kirkintilloch for 8 A.M. start.

The hours were 8 A.M. to 5.30 P.M. with an hour off for lunch. Water was heated in a can on the blacksmith's fire and often I would toast 'my piece' with a piece of iron made red hot and held with tongs close to the bread and cheese or bacon. Work was mainly on Morris cars and I was soon seen to be apt and within the year I worked there I was tackling all manner of repairs. One mechanic, Alex Husband used to strike terror in the heart of apprentices, but he was a fine tradesman and taught me much. I remember one occasion when I rightly incurred his wrath. Before removing the valve cotters it was usual to empty a syringe to remove gathered oil, and this was squirted through a return hole into the engine sump. On this occasion I unfortunately forgot ~~that~~ that the sump had been removed and Alex was working at the bearings in the pit below. You can imagine his language when a squirt of dirty black oil descended on him from above! And of course there was the joy of being allowed to move cars about and even to be given a shot on the road when the mechanic was testing after repairs. The year soon passed. My Mother died just after I had handed her my well earned 5/- for a week's work, and the days of Ravenswood would soon have to come to an end. With permission of Uncle Willie, I purchased a second hand Raleigh motor bike. Travel was now an added treat, but on a lunchtime spin one day a car came out of a blind corner and I finished up over a hedge. That was the last of the motor bike, and shortly after I had recovered Ravenswood was sold and I went with Hetty to live in Woodlands Drive in Glasgow. During the following Glasgow years Lenzie remained my centre. I continued to travel by train twice a week for two hours organ practice on the organ of the Union Church and had lessons at first from the organist, Mr Jeffrey. 'woollie whiskers' we called him because of his tobacco stained moustache. I made good progress under him and was runner up for the Glasgow Society of Organists Trophy in open competition one year. I was first attracted to the pipe organ when asked to hold notes for the tuner and was allowed time off school for this purpose. Later I went to R.H. Clifford Smith and had weekly lessons on the splendid Willys organ of Glasgow Cathedral. The next time I tried for the Trophy I won it. My first fee for organ playing came when I was asked to play for a funeral in Lenzie Parish Church. As far as I remember I got two guineas and with the money bought a pair of spectacles...my noseys parkers, I called them, after the name of the deceased. Little did I think at that time that I would be concerned with so many funeral services one way and another in later years.

For my work I now travelled daily by subway right across Glasgow from Hillhead to Shields Road. The firm was Ritchies Ltd in Scotland, Fiat agents, so my experience was widened and I worked there for over a year. Finding that I was able to cope with the exact measurements required in reboring cylinder blocks, the foreman gave me all this work and it became a bit monotonous. Also I was doing this for the princely sum of seven shilling and six pence a week (in the money of the day) I sought an interview with the boss, Jimmie Ritchie and stated my case. His reply was, 'When you are doing that you are doing nothing else.' Which was one of my points. I watched the Glasgow Herald and moved to work on Austins with Pender and Co, Scotland Street, and I could now cycle from Woodlands Drive. I was to be with this firm from 1931 till 1938 during which time I qualified as a journeyman and had a great variety of experience. While at Ritchies, lunch had been rolls and cheese with milk which I ate in a dairy, followed by reading the papers etc in the King's Library. Now, at Penders, the toasting was revived, using a large paraffin blowlamp to heat a metal grid, and on good summer days I would spend the rest of the dinner hour by the banks of the Forth and Clyde canal in the sunshine.