



# DALGETY BAY PROBUS CLUB



**Issue 6**

**16<sup>th</sup> June 2020**



## **FROM THE PRESIDENT – Michael Hamilton**

Good morning Gentlemen and welcome to our sixth newsletter.

Today's speaker would have been a returning Roger Stark enlightening us on 'The Future of Longevity or Methuselah and the Recycled Teenagers'. You may remember he introduced us to 'The Happiness Business' when he talked with great humour and took us through ways that we can top up our own happiness - fresh air, sunshine, achievement, excitement, exercise, friends, music and laughter. To quote Harry Lauder – 'Happiness is one of the few things in the world that doubles every time you share it with someone else.' Looking forward to Roger cheering us up again!

### **'Lockdown – saves money?'**

There are advantages and disadvantages to most situations. One noticeable benefit from this lockdown, which you may share, is the reduced household monthly expenditure. We continue to wine and dine well and always at home which is, of course, most important. However, the car has sat happily in the drive, mileage down from an average 1,000 miles to 10 miles per month. Maybe these savings should be set aside to help pay for the

country's massive debt!

Another curious benefit is time saving or its allocation to different more enjoyable activities. Weekly grocery shopping is half-an-hour online sitting comfortably on a sofa and travel time is zeroed with delivery to the door. Garden plants, more paint and even a hair clipper arrive without going outdoors. Virtual browsing, however, is not the same as the real thing!

### **'Lockdown – saves time?'**

### **'Easing Lockdown – Phase 2'**

At time of writing, there is an air of confidence that we may move to phase 2 of lockdown easing with the announcement expected in the briefing this Thursday. This is good news! How much easing is dependent on phase 1 not putting in reverse our successful control of the virus over the past 12 weeks. We need to and must sustain our vigilance.

Until next time, always stay safe and very best wishes,

Michael Hamilton



## EDITOR THOUGHTS – Ian Dickson

Welcome again to our Probud Newsletter, the 6th to be published.

At long last we can now see an easing of lockdown, there is real progress in reducing the effect of the virus. Stage 2 of easing is due to begin shortly with the opening, with many restrictions still, of shops and other commercial businesses. Hopefully the reduction in infections and the all important `R` number will continue.

Although we have not used it much in the past year or two we still have our caravan. I found the Caravan club site booking system was accepting bookings so hoping we may see an easing of lockdown I was able to book their site on the Mull of Galloway from the 18<sup>th</sup> of July. Their newsletter this week confirms they are hoping to open this site on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July. We may have an outdoor holiday with all of the recommended social distancing this summer after all.

Another interesting comment from Tommy Bryson is that one of the Kirkcaldy clubs, which has a membership of about 30, is organising `Zoom` Probud meetings. Certainly worth looking at for the autumn in our club, the problem may be the larger numbers at our meetings.

This edition again brings new contributors, new tales from past contributors and the next instalment from our African explorer.

We start with an update from David Brown who, poor soul is still in Spain. Not sure if it is still full lockdown. This was written before the opening of the bowling club last week so has been slightly adapted to reflect that change. You may remember a Probud meeting during David`s year as President where his daughter sang beautifully. David is delighted to let us listen to his daughter, Isobel, and granddaughter, Morven, singing a duet of two songs from Miss Saigon. He has provided a link to these songs which are in this newsletter and now also on the Probud website.

Early this year David Robinson missed a Probud meeting. The story of why he was absent is fascinating. He was a member of a Teesside lifeboat crew for 25 years, so was asked to join a seafront service to commemorate the sad loss of a coaster. Continuing the nautical theme Willie Allan tells us about the NATO submarine rescue system.

After his success with the Lollipop Man John Simons has risen through the ranks in Manchester police and now has an extremely important role in security at Manchester Airport. His next tale is `Just in Case`, again this is a tale in two parts.

We left Allen Cochrane heading to a watering hole in Zambia. The final part of this expedition is next. There is further family history from Tommy Bryson where he tells us of connections to very interesting historical figures from Scotland`s most famous families. We will need to be more respectful given his heritage and the duelling history of his family.

The last article in this edition comes from John Kent. It is a wartime story of an aircraft coming down in Cowdenbeath, a story John has been encouraged to research by his family with the help of Eric Simpson. Finally, reports from the various Probud groups, Digipix, Bowls and Golf.

Again, many thanks to all who have contributed. Please do keep the stories coming.

My e mail is [i.dickson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:i.dickson@tiscali.co.uk).



## THE CONTINUING SPANISH TALE - David Brown

Hi all,

Outdoor bowling has returned but is very restricted. Your bowling Convenor has decided it is my duty to look at all other options to ensure you get regular outdoor exercise. So thought cycling would be ideal for many of you as it gets you outdoors which is proven to be far safer than being indoors. I appreciate there are some risks involved so would suggest you keep your speed lower than the 30 mph which is a legal requirement in some areas of the Bay. Would suggest 20 mph should be the maximum to avoid any unnecessary risks to yourselves and others.

As some of you will be aware my son does cycling proficiency for the children at Donibristle School so I asked if he would be willing to assist any of our members who may not be "up to speed" in their cycling proficiency.

As there may be one or two members who do not regularly get on their bike and require some guidance, he has genuinely agreed to assist in any way he can. In case any of you have any concerns regarding his undoubted skills I have included a short video of a cyclist with very little experience who fell into that category amongst other things along the way. (Available on the Probus website)

As can be seen in the video, to ensure his and other road users complete safety my son took him out into the country explaining his reasoning and said it would also give him the opportunity to see all of the interesting things nature had to offer particularly in the hedgerows and ditches whilst cycling.

It certainly seemed like a good idea until Alan discovered his friend appeared to suffer from poor vision and very soon after mounting his bike viewed the surrounding area a lot closer to the wildlife than my son was anticipating.

Despite a "second" close encounter and being offered a lift home he insisted on persevering.

This gentleman was clearly a man with determination and faith although fortunately not wearing his Sunday best.

It may not come as a surprise to some of you that unfortunately things went from bad to worse and on swerving to avoid an oncoming tree hit the rear of a stationary transit lorry which the driver STUPIDLY thought was parked in a safe place in the lay-by used for overnight parking.

Anyway the good news is my son has been in touch with the hospital and the doctors have assured him in their technical jargon being used a lot just now by government ministers, that after a very uncomfortable night they have had a wee "peak" this morning and it is now starting to bottom out and are confident they will have dislodged the saddle in the foreseeable future but unable to put an exact time or date. "Seem to have heard the last bit a lot recently"

Alan's friend, despite initially feeling this outcome was down to poor instruction now accepts when Alan explained that to continually check his mirror did not mean neglecting to watch the road in front. His friend added it was an experience he will never forget and once he gets the bike repaired will look forward to participating in this form of exercise as long as he is able to.

Trust this assures anyone having any doubts to now get on your bike.

Finally hope you all are keeping well and in positive mood as things are now starting to look encouraging.

Best wishes from Reverend I Am Jolly. 🤪🙏👍

David Brown cycling joke.

<https://www.facebook.com/576458411/posts/10157421922638412/?d=n>

2 Duets by David's daughter and granddaughter.

[https://www.smule.com/p/2400628951\\_3594102988](https://www.smule.com/p/2400628951_3594102988)

[https://www.smule.com/p/2400628951\\_3594114206](https://www.smule.com/p/2400628951_3594114206)



## SINKING OF THE LAIRDSFIELD - David Robinson's Service in RNLI

Members of Probus have very interesting tales to tell.

My close neighbour, good friend and member of Probus, David Robinson has a long association with RNLI. Originally from Redcar on Teesside he was for 25 years a member of local lifeboat crews. He first joined Redcar lifeboat in 1959, moved to Teesmouth lifeboat in 1965 where he was a crew member until coming to Dalgety in 1984. In total 25 years service in RNLI.

His early years were on shore at Redcar. After that he had over 18 years as engineer on board the Teesmouth lifeboat where his service certificate shows he was a member of crews which saved 35 lives. Early this year he told me he would be missing a Probus meeting. The story he told me was of a coaster, the Lairdsfield, which sank off the mouth of the Tees on February 6<sup>th</sup> 1970 with the loss of all 10 of the crew. Many of those lost were from the West of Scotland, others were from the local Tees area or from Northern Ireland.

At the time the loss was the greatest sea tragedy in the local area since the war. The loss is still remembered so to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragedy a seafront service was held to which relatives of the crew and those who had taken part in the attempted rescue were invited. David was one of the 4 remaining RNLI crew members who were on the Teesmouth lifeboat that day.



The lifeboat, the 'Sarah Jane and James Season', was first to arrive having been told a ship had capsized. What they saw was unexpected, only above water was part of the bow of the upturned hull of a coaster. One of the lifeboat crew knocked on the hull with a hammer to check if there was any response. There was none. The impression was the ship had capsized very quickly so the crew had no time to escape. Even if crew had escaped, survival time in the North Sea in February would have been short. As the ship had gone down in a very busy shipping lane in the entrance to the Tees it was recovered very quickly. The ship

had been loaded with steel at Middlesbrough and was headed for Cork. When it was salvaged using a sea crane it became clear poor loading of the cargo with steel plates loaded on top of steel columns had led to the cargo moving, causing the ship to capsize.

As with many of these tragedies there are stories of those who were fortunate not to be on the ship when it sank and of those who were on board who were less fortunate. The Lairdsfield only made it to sea on the third attempt to leave port. The first attempt was abandoned when a crew member broke a leg and so the ship returned to have him taken to hospital. The second attempt to leave was also abandoned, this time because of engine trouble. Another lucky person was the local pilot who had only left the ship shortly before it sank. The ship's second officer was one of the unfortunate, he only joined the ship at the last moment to 'hitch a lift' home to Ireland.



The history of the lifeboat, the 'Sarah Jane and James Season', is interesting. It was a Watson class lifeboat, one of the most popular and iconic lifeboats used by RNLI for many years. It was in service at Teesmouth for 26 years from 1960 to 1986. In that time it was called out 101 times and is credited with saving 22 lives. The shape and the look of the Watson lifeboat is the shape we know and remember. After service at Teesmouth this boat then saw service at Shoreham before being sold privately, becoming the Manx Voyager based in the Isle of Man.



## THE NATO SUBMARINE RESCUE SYSTEM – Willie Allan

The NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS), based at HM Naval Base Clyde at Faslane, is a tri-national partnership between France, Norway and the UK. The system provides a rescue capability primarily to the partner nations but also to NATO and allied nations and to any submarine of any nationality equipped with a suitable mating surface around its hatches.

NSRS entered service in 2008, replacing the UK's previous Renfrew based rescue system, the LR5, which was used in the attempted rescue of the Russian submarine Kursk in 2000. The complete system is fully air transportable in a variety of suitable aircraft and is capable of launch and recovery in a significant wave height of up to 5 metres (sea state 6) and can reach any distressed submarine (DISSUB) in 72-96 hours from the alert, dependent upon location.

On receipt of a 'SUBSUNK' alert that a submarine is in difficulties, the submarine operator will initiate the NSRS call-out procedure. The initial intervention system, which is centred upon an off-the-shelf remotely operated vehicle (ROV) will mobilise to the scene about 24 hours in advance of the full rescue system. Once on-site it will locate the distressed submarine (DISSUB), establish communications, conduct damage assessment and prepare the DISSUB for rescue operations.



The Submarine Rescue Vehicle (SRV) along with a portable launch and recovery system (PLARS), support and operating equipment and the hyperbaric treatment complex (known as the Transfer Under Pressure (TUP) equipment) will arrive approximately 24 hours later. All equipment and personnel will be flown to the mobilisation port for embarkation on a suitable mother ship, which will then sail to the scene where the SRV will be launched. The aim is to achieve time-to-first-rescue of 72 hours, with personnel being brought to the surface in groups of 12, and transferring them to the NSRS

hyperbaric treatment facility if necessary.



The SRV is a manned submersible and was developed from previous rescue vehicles, notably LR5, and developed and built by Perry Slingsby Systems Ltd in North Yorkshire. It is 10m long, weighs 30 tonnes and has an all-steel single piece hull. The craft is operated by a three-man crew (two pilots and a rescue chamber operator), can operate at depths down to 610m and can mate with the submarine rescue hatch seal at angles of up to 60 degrees in any direction. It uses high-temperature batteries that enable it to stay submerged for up to 96 hours. Propulsion is provided by two 25kW units, with a further four smaller units being used for positioning. It is the latest generation of rescue vehicle and has diverless recovery, fibre-optic data communications and a self-contained breathing system.



NSRS has operated from numerous mother ships and exercised to bottomed diesel submarines of NATO nations as well as those of Russia and Sweden. In 2013 NSRS achieved a first by conducting a full rescue cycle with the nuclear attack submarine HMS Astute, which was suspended mid-water below large mooring buoys. This success was repeated in 2015 in the Mediterranean to the French nuclear submarine Rubis.

The system and associated support personnel are on standby 24/7 to be deployed anywhere in the world. The British, Norwegian and French navies provide overall command and control personnel. They also provide the necessary medical staff, TUP operators and divers/swimmers. Rolls-Royce provides the core rescue team to operate the equipment and manage the facility at Faslane. For a short video tour of the SRV, commonly referred to as “Nemo”, click [here](#).



### **JUST IN CASE – John Simons**

In 1974 the amalgamated Force of Greater Manchester Police (G.M.P.) had been formed. At that time I was serving as a Det. Insp. in the Murder Squad or to be politically correct The Serious Crime Squad.

Manchester had been targeted by different terrorist groups. Consequently I had been specially trained in combating terrorism but in particular Irish terrorism mainly of a Republican cause. This included dealing with explosives and terrorist interview technique and negotiation, I was one of the Force negotiators which also included hostage situations and suicide threats. (You would have thought I'd be able to win the simplest difference of views with my wife or at least get the last word But no) Later in the 70's I was promoted to Det. Chief Insp. and posted to take charge of the Special Branch at Manchester International Airport (M.I.A.) This was an appropriate position for me as the airport had to deal with some difficult flights including El Al flight between Tel Aviv and Manchester but more especially flights to and from Ireland particularly Belfast. The “troubles” in Belfast were at a peak and not unnaturally air travel was being targeted with the intention of causing maximum disruption.

Passengers flying from Manchester to Belfast were subjected to additional checks with reciprocal arrangements at Aldergrove, Belfast. Regularly threats of “Bomb on Board” were received at Air Traffic Control M.I.A. or at the control room at G.M.P. H.Q. Calls to the Police were given extra attention if the call included a known code. That is not to say that calls to the airport were treated and less seriously. Thankfully most calls were bogus but even so these calls created a great deal of disruption, as the senior special branch officer it was my responsibility to deal with these situations assisted by a trained team of officers.

One such call was received by Air Traffic Control on a very rainy Monday morning involving an outward bound flight to Belfast. As usual the call was brief with the call handler only able to catch the words bomb, luggage and the flight number delivered in a thick Irish accent. The flight passengers had already boarded and the aircraft was preparing to taxi to its designated runway. Time was of the essence with immediate action necessary.

Arriving at the scene with sufficient of my support team I was pleased to be told that the pilot had shut down his engines. The co-pilot and some cabin crew had disembarked leaving the Captain to deal with any technical issues and enough cabin crew to deal with the passengers.

The next step was to get the passengers off and for them to bring with them any small items of luggage that had to be stowed in the overhead lockers.

This was quickly dealt with by very efficient cabin crew whilst baggage handlers had already started to off-load all hold luggage.

The procedure then was for my team to make sure that all passengers remained on the outer concourse and not to disgorge into the airport building. Hold luggage was being assembled in lines a safe distance from the passengers and the aircraft. Fortunately this was not a full flight but the passengers were beginning to complain as they were subjected to typical Manchester weather, pouring rain. Some had raincoats and others were sharing short hand-held umbrellas. It was not a happy gathering.

Meanwhile the whole of the aircraft was being searched, a dog handler had arrived but dogs were not my preferred search technique. A previous unfortunate experience had dulled my previous good faith in our canine friends. During a similar situation some months before an extremely enthusiastic and energetic German Shepard had discovered a small but suspicious suspicious package underneath a seat in the aft cabin of an inward bound Belfast flight. Instead of barking (as trained) to draw the attention of his handler the excited "Lucky" had grasped the package in his mouth exited the plane and bounded over to a group of us, tail wagging furiously and dropped the suspect package at our feet, causing terrified panic. A later examination of the package revealed a significant trace of explosives that had to be disposed of with a controlled explosion. Well done "Lucky". Since then I had preferred the more technical approach with equipment obtained from the M.O.D. paid for with funds provided by the M.I.A. The aircraft at least proved clear of any explosives.

Just the passengers and their luggage to deal with.

(To be continued in the next newsletter)



## ZAMBIA PART 2 – Allen Cochrane

We left this story after the bombing of President Nkomo`s house. He survived, managed to escape no one knowing how.

As a result of the attack there were roadblocks on all roads in Zambia. However we could do nothing about our situation so we carried out our dive programme.

The two lakes lie in the Mpongwe Wheat Scheme area and Nampamba is pumped for irrigation purposes. Both lakes were formed by the collapse of limestone caverns. Kashiba is over 60 meters deep and Nampamba around 25. Visibility is exceptional. We managed a dive at Nampamba then prepared for our Kashiba dive.



A training dive to 30 meters was carried out in Kashiba. We used the club inflatable to carry a shot line across Kashiba to the far side where the cliff was vertical. Above are pics of entry and dragging the boat across.

After another campfire meal and booze up we slept soundly once again. In the morning, after breakfast, our porters reappeared and we struck camp and carried the katundu back to the vehicles. We agreed to travel in convoy back to Lusaka so as to hopefully mitigate any problems at roadblocks. We thought it would be difficult to avoid a natural suspicion of fifteen white folk travelling with cylindrical bombs particularly as my land rover had been painted with illicit Zambia Defence Force green paint. In the event we had no problem with roadblocks and the police and army were very polite. Aside from my having to remove the front prop shaft of the Land Rover there were no delays and we arrived at our house about 10:00 PM.

As John and I stopped to open our garden gate a burst of anti-aircraft fire soared up into the night sky from a garden around 500 metres away. The house turned out to be the abode of a senior ZIPRA commander. That gave us a bit of a turn and showed how jittery the rebel forces were.

So what had happened to Nkomo's house? The Rhodesians had a spy (a Zambian National called Chris Gough) who had joined the Lusaka Golf Club. The 18<sup>th</sup> hole was an eight iron shot from Nkomo's house on Presidents Lane. This lane also led to the back entrance to President Kenneth Kaunda's State House. Gough had reported that Nkomo was at home on the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> April.

The Rhodesians planned a three pronged attack on ZIPRA installations in Zambia. Nkomo's House, the Liberation Centre, (the joint HQ for co-operative planning by senior officers of ZIPRA, South African ANC and SWAPO) and the ZIPRA fuel store. The attack on Nkomo's house was intended to assassinate him in retaliation for the shooting down of two Rhodesian commercial passenger aircraft by ZIPRA forces.

Seven Sabres (modified long-wheel-base Land Rovers) and the three SAS assault teams were waiting on a ferry on Kariba Dam out of sight of the populated areas of Zambia. The force landed in Zambia in the evening and travelled up a rough track which led to the Great East Road. They lost one vehicle to a muddy ravine and had to cancel the attack on the ZIPRA stores.



The team assigned to Nkomo's house set up mortars on the eighteenth fairway, keeping respectfully clear of the green (terrified of the groundkeeper?). The attack commenced at 03:00 AM, Just after John had driven past. The house was attacked, the ZIPRA guards killed and the house set ablaze. The team searched the ruins but could not find the unmistakable body of Joshua Nkomo. We, of course know he wasn't there. Why was he not there? Turns out he was tipped off by the Brits who had a spy in Rhodesian security and didn't want the Lancaster House talks hindered.





The team assigned to the ZIPRA HQ carried out its attack and blew up the offices and vehicles. Both teams then travelled together retracing their inbound track. They paused to allow three wounded soldiers to be airlifted out and returned to the ferry and back to Rhodesia.

This was not the first or last time Zambia was made to pay for its support for the liberation forces in Rhodesia, Namibia (SWAPO) and South Africa. I remained in Zambia until 1989 and witnessed the results of many similar events. I also participated in resolving or trying to resolve various water related mishaps and disasters. I did also squeeze in quite a lot of work.



## **SHIELDING & SELF ISOLATING - The Brysons continued!!**

### **The continuing family tree story.**

The second interesting family tree member is Sir Alexander Boswell of Balmuto, my 13<sup>th</sup> great grandad. Born in 1464, he died at Flodden 9<sup>th</sup>. September 1513 along with King James IV (the last king in to die in a battlefield in Britain)

Balmuto House, home to many of the Boswell's in my tree is a ruin that lies approximately 1 mile to the left, or north, of the Orrock Quarry to Kirkcaldy road. Initially I thought there was a spelling mistake between Balmuto and Balmullo near Tayport where I was brought up. Balmuto it was. As you pass the Cowdenbeath to Burntisland junction heading to Kirkcaldy the first house on your left is West Balmuto Lodge.

Sir Alexander was married to Elizabeth D Ramsay daughter of Sir Alexander Ramsay Baronies of Foulden & Dalhousie. Elizabeth had a brother another Sir Alexander Ramsay. (A coincidence in that my wife Eleanor's maiden name is E D Ramsay).

Let us fast forward 6 generations, this takes us to Alexander Boswell. Lord Auchinleck married his cousin (his second marriage) Elizabeth Boswell, daughter of John Boswell of Balmuto, in 1769. One of Lord Auchinleck's son's by his first marriage was James Boswell who would become renowned as a diarist and biographer of Samuel Johnson.

An earlier Elizabeth Boswell born at Balmuto in 1671 married into the Wemyss family of Wemyss estates, and the villages east of Kirkcaldy. John Wemyss was my 8<sup>th</sup> great grandad.

Fast forward to Helen Wemyss my 3<sup>rd</sup>. Great grandmother who married Thomas Cook (a Ship Master) in 1825 in Ferry-Port-on-Craig, renamed Tayport around the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The registration district of Ferry-Port-on-Craig still exists.

The last duel in Scotland also involved the Boswells and Balmuto. An extract from a newspaper in the National Library of Scotland tells us,

*“A true and particular account of a most unfortunate duel which took place on Tuesday the 26th March, 1822, at Auchtertool, in Fife, in consequence of a song which appeared in one of the Glasgow Newspapers, when Sir Alex. Boswell of Auchinleck was desperately wounded, and is since dead.*

*On Tuesday last, about eleven o'clock forenoon, a meeting took place at Auchtertool, near Balmutto, between Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, and Mr James Stuart of Dunearn. Sir Alexander was attended by Commissioner Douglas, and Mr. Stuart by the Earl of Rosslyn. The Sheriff had heard of it, and the night before it took place, they were bound over to keep the peace. This took place at twelve at night, and on Tuesday morning the one party set off at three, and the other at four o'clock for Fife, where they met. The parties fired by signal, and Sir Alexander received his antagonist's shot in the breast, at the collar bone, which went through and injured the spine, and he instantly fell. Sir Alexander was carried to Balmutto House, where he is attended by Lady Boswell and several surgeons of the first eminence.”*

This Sir Alexander Boswell was the elder son of James Boswell the biographer of Samuel Johnson.

Amazing what happened so close our doorstep!!



## **WARTIME MEMORIES OF A CLOSE SHAVE. - John Kent**

I was almost 8 years old when the second world war began, living in Cowdenbeath. There was an air raid shelter almost next door to our house. It was just a brick building with a concrete roof and I remember my Granddad telling me during its construction that if a bomb was dropped on our street, the first building to collapse would probably be the shelter, and that I shouldn't ever go in it! We used to climb on the roof of the shelter at night and watch the enemy planes fly overhead. Locally, there were fears that the Germans would target the Forth Bridge and Rosyth dockyard.

However, my closest brush with death involved a British aircraft. It happened in January 1942 when I was ten years old. I had a morning paper-round at the time and had just delivered the last paper to a house at the top of Stenhouse Street in Cowdenbeath, to Mrs Hunter at number 190. A few minutes earlier I had noticed a plane flying quite low, then lost sight of it. As I made my way back down Stenhouse Street after my last delivery, I heard a massive bang followed by an explosion behind me. I turned around and saw the tail of an airplane sticking out of one of the houses back down the street where I had just been. I could see huge flames and billowing smoke. I didn't hang about, as I needed to get to school by 09:00. Later that day I found out that it was Mrs Hunter's house (and the adjoining property) that had been hit, exactly where I'd been just three or four minutes earlier. The next day, I looked for reports in the newspapers about the crash but there were none. I remember my granddad saying to my dad that he thought the authorities were suppressing the news for some reason. There was some local speculation that the plane had come from an allied aircraft carrier which was stationed in the Firth of Forth at the time, but we never heard anything more about it.

I have never forgotten the incident but rarely, if ever, spoke about it with anyone, including my family. It was 62 years later in 2004 that I came across the story again by chance, after we'd decided to return to

Scotland to retire. We were staying with our friends Frances and Peter Christopher for about three weeks at their house in Dalgety Bay. One day, my friend handed me a book called "Dalgety Bay, Heritage and Hidden History", written by a local author and historian called Eric Simpson. The book provided some details about the crash I'd witnessed back in 1942. According to the book, the plane had taken off from Donibristle on an unauthorised mission (although this aspect may have been just a wartime rumour) and crashed into two semi-detached houses in Stenhouse Street killing the lone pilot, and four civilians in the two houses: Elizabeth Baird, her daughter Grace Baird, Mary Hunter and her niece Christina. Eric Simpson's primary source for the story was a lady called Mrs Marwick. Just six years old at the time, she was the granddaughter of Elizabeth Baird & niece of Grace Baird.

After reading the account in the book, I put the episode to the back of my mind but my interest was rekindled during the Coronavirus lockdown when I was asked by one of my sons if he could write the story of my early life. Shortly afterwards, I mentioned the plane crash incident to our President. He was able to give me Eric Simpson's phone number. I called Eric and told him that I'd witnessed the crash in 1942. With additional information from Eric and some internet research by my son, we managed to construct the following account of what happened:

The plane was a Fulmar II XX8802, part of 808 Squadron. Piloted by 20 year old Acting Sub-Lieutenant Peter Guy, it took off on 28 January 1942 from HMS Merlin, a Royal Naval Air Station at Donibristle on the north shore of the Firth of Forth near Dalgety Bay. Shortly afterwards, around 08:50am, it crashed into the adjoining houses at 188 and 190 Stenhouse Street, Cowdenbeath, Fife. The pilot was killed instantly, while falling masonry and the ensuing fire killed the 4 occupants who were at home in the two houses at the time. At 188 were Elizabeth Baird, aged 66 and her 21 year old daughter Grace Miller Currie Baird. Victims at 190 were 52 year old Mary Hunter and her 14 year old niece Christina Thomson. According to local history, Christina had stayed off work that day as she had a bad cold.

News of the crash wasn't released until about three years after the war ended, when the Dunfermline Press ran the story. Peter Guy was from Kirbymoorside in Yorkshire. He is buried in Dunfermline Douglas Bank Cemetery.

I have no doubt about how fortunate I was that day; my life was saved by just three or four minutes. There is one more ironic twist of fate attached to this tale. That morning, there was a five-year old girl living at 201 Stenhouse Street, about 300 metres away from where the plane impacted. Her name? Nancy Reekie, who was to become my wife for over 60 years and mother to our five children.



**DIGIPIX**

Thanks to all who have contributed to the website galleries this month. Since start of shutdown the Digipix galleries have been accessed 750 times so the photos are clearly being appreciated.

There are still 2 weeks left for the June project of "Contrasts" but photos are welcome for any of the Digipix galleries. As Summer is now upon us, rather than a new project for July, the subject will revert to "Dalgety Bay in Bloom" to record the outcome of everyone's lockdown gardening efforts. To assist, here are 10 tips for flower photography:

### **1. Photograph flowers on an overcast day**

Not every summer's day is a sunny blue sky day but white sky days are perfect for photographing flowers. The soft even light of an overcast day compliments the delicacy of the flowers and there are no shadows and no harsh bright spots, which makes it easier to get a good exposure.

## **2. Backlight will make your flowers glow**

Another type of light that is excellent for flower photography is backlight. Backlight happens when the sun is directly in front of you lighting your flower from behind. Because flower petals are translucent, backlight makes flowers appear to glow. Try to capture backlit flowers late in the day when the sun is close to the horizon which will cast nice warm light on the rest of your image too.

## **3. Watch out for wind**

When it comes to photographing flowers, wind is your enemy. The easiest way to avoid it is to do your photography early in the morning when there is less chance of wind. If there is a bit of wind, you can use a piece of cardboard to create a block. Your other option is to bring a flower inside and place it in front of a suitable background. A calendar picture of a garden scene, suitably out of focus in your photograph, can be particularly effective.

## **4. Get closer**

Without a special macro lens, the best means of getting a close-up image of a flower is to use a telephoto lens and zoom in to the flower. Also, check if your camera has a macro setting, usually denoted by a tulip logo, which will improve your result.

## **5. Use a reflector**

If your subject is in the shade, you can use a reflector, even just a sheet of white paper, to bounce some light back towards your subject and make the flower more vibrant.

## **6. Avoid a cluttered background**

As with every photograph, the background can make or break the image. Try to change your position so that there is nothing distracting behind your flower.

## **7. Use a shallow depth of field**

Shallow depth of field is when only part of the image is sharp and the rest is soft and out-of-focus. You can achieve this by using a wide aperture (low aperture number) such as f/4 or f/2.8. The effect is even more pronounced if you are using a telephoto lens with a wide aperture.

## **8. Make it sharp**

Even if you are using a shallow depth of field, it is essential that at least part of the flower is sharp. Use a tripod or steady surface and your camera's timer for best results. Remember that even if there doesn't appear to be much wind, flowers always move. If your flower isn't sharp, try using a faster shutter speed. Finally, check your focus and if necessary use manual focus to ensure the camera is focussed on the most important part of the subject.

## **9. Change your point of view**

Move around and try some different angles for more interesting images. Try photographing the flower from behind or underneath to capture a point of view that is different from what we see from a standing perspective.

## **10. Focus through another flower**

One effective technique is focussing through another flower. Try positioning yourself so that another flower is in front of your main subject and very close to the end of your lens. The secondary flower will become a blur of colour and your final image will have a more abstract feel.



## GOLF

One of the allowed pastimes to be given the go ahead is golf.

Strict guidelines were agreed by Golf's Governing bodies with Government and these have been used by all golf clubs. There are strict limits on numbers, only 2 in each group, no touching of flagsticks and other items on the course such as bunker rakes. Only club members are allowed to play, no visitors or member guests, each member must be prerecorded on the tee booking. As part of the planning for test and trace this requirement is to allow quick checking of possible contacts should a member find he has the virus.

At Aberdour the reaction of members has been quite remarkable. First booking is at 5.30 in the morning the last at 8pm in the evening. Members are restricted in the number of bookings each can make in a day and each week. Even with these restrictions every time is taken within a short time of bookings being opened which is now 6 days ahead.

The aim is only to allow social golf at present. There has been slight easing of the 2 in each group rule at some clubs and there is planning in place to possibly start competitions in July. It may be our Probus golf could start in the near future. If that does happen there will need to be a draw a week beforehand with each 2 ball arranging to play at a time they have to organise with the results being coordinated by e mail at the end of the competition day. Where there is a will there is a way!!!



## BOWLS

Time to press  again?

Most of our bowlers are aware that the summer venue, Dalgety Bay Bowling Club, opened for play last Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June, initially for **members' only**. Our Probus Friday morning get-together will unfortunately have to wait.

The current limitations and precautionary rules on playing etiquette and closed clubhouse facilities make it a rather unattractive choice of 'recreation' at present. Some may utter 'don't knock it till you have tried it' but for those who are not bowling club members and so have not received direct communications from the Bowling Club, here are some particular examples:

- All games played during this time will be bounce games.
- The only people who should be in the club grounds after opening are members who have pre-booked to play.
- Play will be limited to three rinks each day to facilitate social distancing which is to be in operation at all times within the club premises.
- Maximum of 4 players per rink from no more than 2 households.
- No spectating is allowed (unless a carer or guardian is required).
- A session of play is one hour followed by a half hour gap between games. This allows 15 minutes for departing players to change their shoes and cleanse equipment and exit the club grounds then a further 15 minutes for the oncoming players to change their shoes and cleanse equipment.
- Only one player from each game should handle the mat and jack.



- The club will provide sanitising arrangements for mats and jacks to be sanitised before and after use. After sanitising, mats and jacks must be allowed to dry fully before use as the alcohol in the sanitizer will cause damage to the green.
- in addition, players should bring their own hand sanitizers/wipes for personal use before, during and after play and should not share their sanitizer with other members.

These initial procedures are subject to review in relation to demand and, of course, the progress of the phased easement of lockdown restraints. Could be a long shot but maybe we will be able to play bowls together before this season ends.

From '*a bowler in waiting*'

### **VOTE OF THANKS – Angus Cameron**

My wife Lena and I have lived in Fife all our lives; we have perhaps fewer stories to tell. When I say all our lives, that's not quite accurate. I spent eight months in digs in Edinburgh during my last year at university.

Whilst basking in the sunshine during the last week or so, I was reminded of a visit many years ago, from an elderly aunt. After offering her favourite tippie, (a glass of iced water) Lena and I decided to walk around our garden with her and pointed out our sundial in the middle of the garden. It had been there for over twenty five years. "Twenty five years?" she exclaimed. "Does it still keep the correct time?"

Again, many thanks for your stories and if all the husbands are still in conversation with wives after 11 weeks of lock down, I look forward to meeting up again at Probus on its resumption.

Angus Cameron