



THE PARISH OF LIVINGSTON OLD

Summer suns are glowing.....



I trace the rainbow through the rain

August 2024

Scottish Charity No. 011826



A Note from the Manse

So much has happened and a number of changes since the last Church Newsletter went out. Life is about change and transformation; as nature changes with the seasons so also the world changes and we change and transform with it. Some of the changes and events are painful and bring sadness, others bring joy.

One of the most painful changes that we experienced as a congregation during this time was the loss of Rev. Gordon Jamieson who was such a prominent member of our church. Since 2000, when Gordon and Annette came to Livingston Old, he became a staunch member and a pillar of our congregation. He was the congregation treasurer, the convenor of Finance and Property Group, one of our pulpit supply people, heating consultant and much more; the person to go to for any issue we had and an invaluable support for me. It will be hard for us to fill the gaps that Gordon left in our congregation. We were stunned by his sudden and unexpected death and he is very much missed by all of us but especially by Annette and the family, who are in our continuous prayers.

Another sad ending for the congregation was the closure of 2nd Livingston Girls Brigade Company which has been meeting in our church since it started. During this time many girls have had the opportunity to learn about faith, make friends and have fellowship and fun in our church. We are grateful to all the leaders and helpers who have served throughout the years and especially more recently: Irene, Laura, Karin, Alison, Ken, and many more.

Yet we also had some positive developments to celebrate during this time. The Preloved Clothes Shop had to close for a couple of weeks but restarted with a new team of enthusiastic volunteer coordinator and helpers. Yet, we still need more volunteers to help, as we have noticed that during the recent weeks, people have come for help with clothes but more especially for food.

We also have a new Session Clerk, Carolyn Nicol and new Assistant Session Clerk, Campbell Troup. We are grateful to Elspeth Robertson who has served as a Session Clerk for the past six years and wish her all the best but she continues to support us in different roles in the congregation.

We are grateful to Jack Pyper who has agreed to help us, at least in the meantime, with the Treasurer post. We are working out how to divide the role that Gordon has done so proficiently and are looking for people who might be able to help. If you can support us in this area of finances, please let me know.

At the end of June, we celebrated as we welcomed four new members to our congregation Uchenna Abana, Jim Weedon, Sandra Weedon and David Black.

As we travel through life, we experience changes that bring us both joy and sorrow. Therefore, there are so many reasons to rejoice and yet there are so many reasons to grieve. Joy can easily dissipate when faced with difficulties; tragedy and loss and sadness and sorrow which replace it can often take hold of us in such a way that it is hard to get over it. Peter reminds us that God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ has given us a new birth and living hope in this life and for the life to come (1 Peter 1: 3-9). Knowing this and believing it, we can live in hope and with the joy of resurrection.

With love in Christ, our hope and joy,

Helu



Parish Register

Deaths

Bill Tilley

Gordon Jamieson

Isabel Finningham

Melrose Howson

Elma Lauder

Baptism

Cassandra Danuta Galazka

New Members

Uchenna Abana

Jim Weedon

Sandra Weedon

David Black

CHURCH CALENDAR

EVERY SUNDAY

9.45am WORSHIP (Village Kirk) 11.15am WORSHIP (St Andrew's)
12.30 – 1.00 Soup Lunch, St Andrews, every last Sunday of the month

EVERY SECOND MONDAY

11.00 am -12.30 pm The Guild at St Andrew's

EVERY TUESDAY

10 am -12 pm Craft Group at the Village Kirk

EVERY WEDNESDAY

10.00 am – 1.00 pm Preloved Clothes (Charity shop) at St Andrews
10.00 am – 1.30 pm Café/soup at St Andrews – soup served from 11.30am to
1.00pm
6.30 pm – 8.30 pm Art Club for children 9 years and over at St Andrews

EVERY THURSDAY

10.30 am – 12 pm Coffee Morning at Village Kirk
2 pm – 4 pm Craft Group at St Andrew's

EVERY FIDAY

2 om – 3.30 pm Friday Club & Cooking Session

SPECIAL SERVICES

September 8th Holy Communion
September 29th Harvest thanksgiving
October 6th Wave of Light/Baby and Infant Loss Memorial Service – 6.30 pm
November 10th Remembrance Sunday
December 1st Holy Communion – First Sunday in Advent
December 1st Time to Remember Service, Remembering our loved ones who are no
longer with us – 6pm



A TRIBUTE to GORDON JAMIESON

Gordon and Annette came to Livingston in 2000 when Gordon left parish ministry to work as the Head of Stewardship at the Church of Scotland head office and they became members of Livingston Old.

Gordon was dedicated to the church and Annette would tell you that there were three people in their marriage – and at times the church took precedence over Annette. As such, soon after they joined Livingston Old, Gordon became heavily involved in the church.

Gordon was a great help and support to me, as a colleague and friend. When I arrived at Livingston Old, he handed me

notes that he made about all aspects of our church life. He prepared notes about members who were in need of pastoral care – who he supported during the vacancy.

As the church treasurer and latterly also the convenor of our finance and property group he was a great asset for us. But he did so many other things for the congregation; so much so that we now realise that we need a big team of people to take on what he did and for sure we will discover more in the coming months. As Moira Glencourse said “Gordon was our solutions man, our problem solver. If you asked his advice on an issue or problem - whether personal, church business or general - he would effortlessly provide a practical solution or a fix. We valued highly his knowledge, his expertise, his tireless support, his wisdom, his judgement and also his much-loved, clearly presented, Excel spreadsheets!

Gordon was a person of integrity, even though at times he could be refreshingly forthright too; yet at the same time very caring and compassionate. He was totally dedicated to the work of the church and in everything he did he was keen to serve with humility and do his best for God’s kingdom.

Family was important to Gordon, he was a wonderful, loving and caring husband to Annette, a loving supportive father to Elspeth and Andrew and a loving grandfather to his five grandchildren whom he adored.

His death came as a shock to all of us and so many people were shaken by his death, not just in our congregation and the congregations around in which he preached and worked but also

within the community here in Livingston. He was a big character. We all have precious memories of him and all of us have been touched by his ministry and benefited greatly from his experience and vast knowledge.

We are missing him badly but Annette and his family are missing him the most. Let's continue to support Annette as she is adjusting to life without Gordon.

Helu



MONEY MATTERS



Unfortunately, we are not able to give you a detailed finance update this time since we are still finding our way through the accounts. Over the past few months, we had some larger than usual expenses to cover the cost of a couple of planned projects, such as the limewash of the Village Kirk and the upgrade of the kitchen at the manse, along with ongoing bills and a few other incidental expenses.

In the last Newsletter, Gordon mentioned that 2024 will be a challenging year for our congregation in terms of income, especially since we have lost a number of generous givers and as a result the income is down. We realise that the cost of living has had an impact on all of us and, more likely as a result, we have less disposable income. At the same time, the cost of running the church has also gone up; therefore, we would like to encourage every member of our congregation to give regularly and generously to support the work of our church.



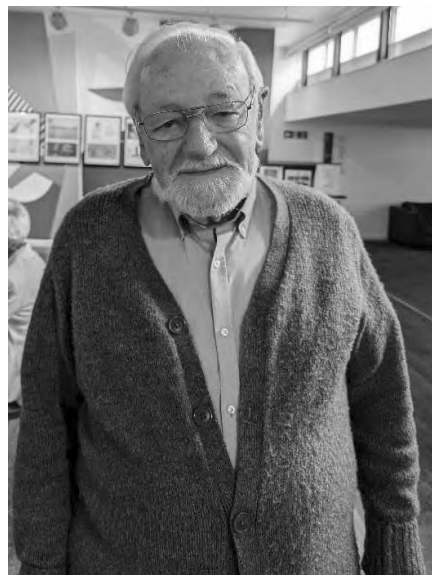
WELCOME!

to

Our New Members



Uchenna Abana, Nelu, Jim Weedon, Sandra Weedon



David Black

WELCOME!

to

Our New Session Clerk

Dr Carolyn Nicol



I joined the Church when I was 17 and a member of St Columba Foxbar in Paisley. David and I transferred our Certificates to Livingston Old after we married and moved here in 1996.

I have helped with the crèche and the Sunday Club in the Village while our children were attending and for a while beyond!

I am now retired from the Health Service and able to commit to other challenges.

Carolyn Nicol

..... And Deputy Session Clerk

Campbell Troup



I was christened and grew up attending St Columba's Blackhall in Edinburgh before joining as a communicant when I was 17. It was at St Columba's I met Jennifer and we married there in 2002. After moving to Livingston in 2004, we started coming to Livingston Old. After our daughter Erin was born in 2011, we became more regular with Erin attending Sunday Club. I was a member of the Congregational Board before becoming an Elder and am

part of the Tech team providing AV and streaming for the services. I work full time from home for a company that provides IT to the financial services sector.

Campbell Troup



A CONVERSATION YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD AT CHURCH.

“Ah’m gonnae be seventy-five next year”

“Away, ye dinnae look seventy-five. Are ye daein’ oanything special?”

Well aye, ah’m gonnae get ma windaes cleaned.”

And so we are!

St Andrews Church is seventy-five in 2025 and to mark the occasion we will have the three beautiful stained-glass windows cleaned and a new protective mesh installed to protect them.

To that end, we are looking for more like-minded people to be part of the “75 team” to help us raise funds for the window project and some other things we would like to organise to celebrate the church’s birthday.

You might be able to help with:

- ✓ A Christmas Carol Concert with the Livingston Ukulele Club.
- ✓ Joining a walk following the old paths to Livingston Village Kirk - a reminder of how we used to go to church
- ✓ Links with the church’s mining past (a group of garden enthusiasts)
- ✓ The history of the church - were you baptised/christened, married here? Were you part of one of the associated groups? Do you have any memories, photos, interesting items you would like to share?

Are there other things you would like to see as part of the 75th?

Our next meeting is on 19th September at 7pm in St Andrew’s church hall. Come along please and bring your ideas with you.

You can also talk to Lesley or Evie (drop me an email eviejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk)

We’re 75 next year and we need all the help we can get!

Evie Johnston

AWAY DAY

HOWDEN PARK CENTRE, LIVINGSTON

Saturday 21 September 2024

10am - 4pm

Aims:

- ❖ To build fellowship within the Kirk Session/Congregation.
- ❖ To Enjoy getting to know one another better.
- ❖ To learn more about how we can serve God in our parish and beyond.

This **Away Day** is open to anyone who is interested. We would like **YOU** to join us and a buffet lunch will be provided.

If you wish to attend, please give your name to Elspeth Robertson
elspethrobertson@blueyonder.co.uk or telephone 01506 411004 by
Sunday 8 September



BATHGATE CONCERT ORCHESTRA

If you enjoyed our music in St Andrew's Church in May, then how about coming along to our Autumn Concert which will be held in Livingston United Parish Church, Nether Dechmont Community Centre, Fells Rigg, Carmondean EH54 8AX, on **Friday 25th October 2024 at 7.30 p.m.**

Looking ahead to the festive season, our pre-Christmas concert will be held in Ladywell Baptist Church, Cedarbank, EH54 6DR, on **Friday 6th December 2024 at 7.30 p.m.**

All welcome to either or both. Entrance is free but a donation would be appreciated at the end.

Aileen Anderson



MAGMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Livingston Kirk

Thursday 26th September 10am - 12noon

Enjoy our home baking, coffee & tea

RAFFLE

(Any donations for the Raffle appreciated)



When a young minister was still single, he preached a sermon he entitled, "Rules for Raising Children." After he got married and had children of his own, he changed the title of the sermon to "Suggestions for Raising Children." When his children got to be teenagers, he stopped preaching on that subject altogether.



NORTH BARN QUILTERS

EXHIBITION

Quilts and Textile Arts

Carmondean Community Centre

Nether Dechmont Farm

Fell Rigg

Livingston

EH54 8AX

Admission (incl. Tea & Cakes) £3 - Children Free

- CASH ONLY EVENT -

Free Parking and Disabled Access

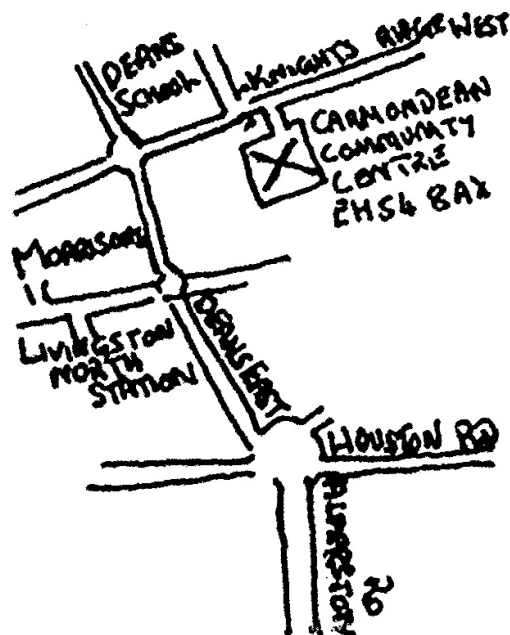
Raffle for Charity Quilts

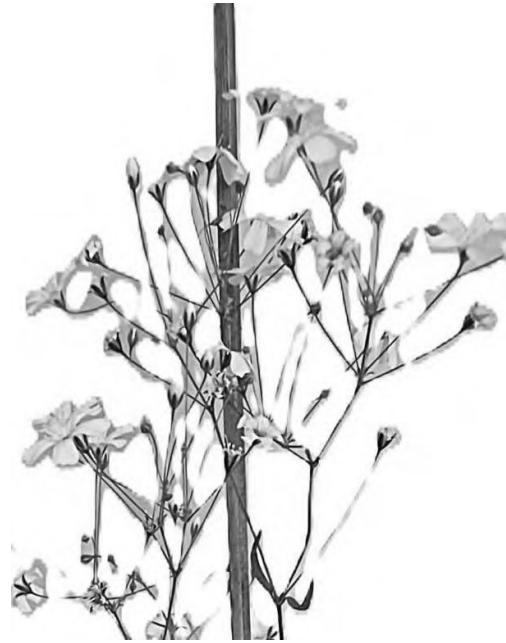
Chinese Raffle

Tombola

Demonstrations

Sales Table





BLOOMIN' LOVELY

On Easter Sunday, Nelu gave us seeds to plant for the coming summer. This photograph is the result of those seeds. Sadly, I don't know the name and have asked others about it but, as yet, this lovely plant is nameless.

Maybe someone will recognise it and let me know. Now the plant is dying back, I will collect its seeds to pass around.

Maureen Hall

Editor's Note: For those viewing the monochrome edition, the plant has white petals and a faint perfume.



THE FRIDAY CLUB HAS BEEN COOKING UP A STORM



We have been welcoming around eight young people along to our weekly club. There are games, tuck shop and, of course, the cooking. A few of the recipes our young people have created are Keema Curry, Air-fryer Frittata, Fruity skewers with yoghurt dip and Bread and Butter pudding.

It's been amazing watching these young people gain confidence in following a recipe and using kitchen equipment. They have really got stuck in each week. Some eat their food whilst at the club and some choose to take it home to their family.

We couldn't run this club without the young volunteer helpers. They come along and run the Tuck Shop, help with following recipes and, of course, the all-important set up and clean up. You are all amazing.

One of our group leaders very cleverly put together a beautiful recipe book with a collection of recipes we have made and all our young people were given a copy before the summer holiday. It's been a busy time looking for new and fun recipes for the new term. Smoothies and milkshakes are always a hit as are traybakes and cookies but we do try to mix it up a bit and include some healthier options too.



Participants need to be in Primaries 5 to 7. If you know a young person who would like to join in the fun please email us at livioldfridayclub@gmail.com. We run every Friday during term time, 2-3.30pm and there is a £1 contribution.

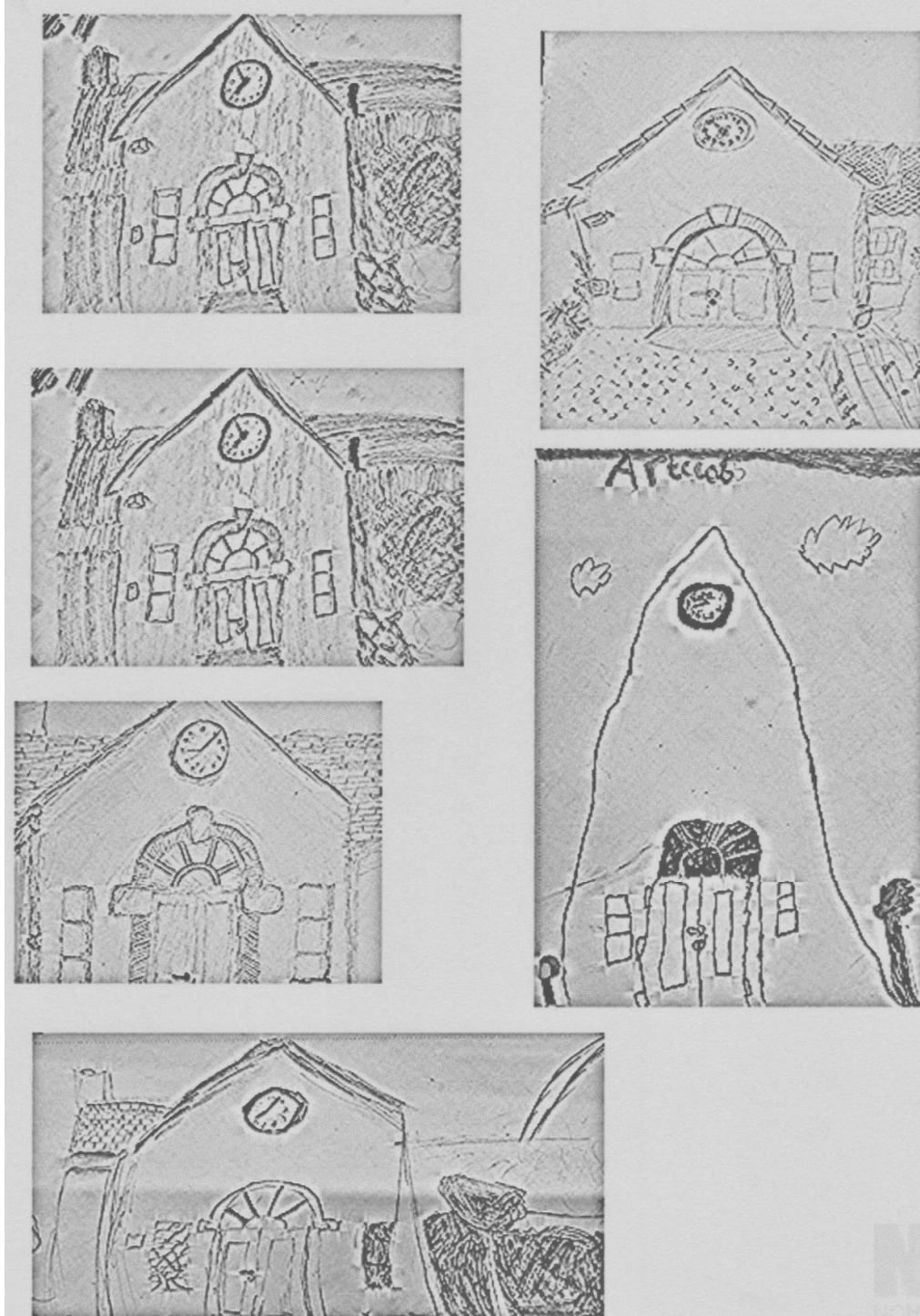
Fiona Lindsay



CHILDRENS ART CLUB

It was a beautiful evening and the children went outside to create a drawing of St Andrew's church. I thought it would be lovely to share some of these drawings with the Newsletter readers.

Jimmy Tripney





WHOSE WE ARE AND WHOM WE SERVE

A very interesting talk from Jeanette about Van Gogh and his missionary work before he became a famous painter, was our last meeting of the spring session of our Guild.

We also had a Beetle Drive at one of our meetings and, at another, a Quiz. We enjoyed the fellowship over tea and coffee and a catch up at all our meetings.

We begin the **Autumn session on 2nd September 2024 at 1.45pm in St Andrew's Church.**

If you would like to come along, need further information or assistance with transport, please get in touch.

Jean Finch



SOUP ON SUNDAY

It's been really good over the last few months to enjoy soup together on the last Sunday of each month, except July & December. Soup on Sunday is an opportunity for us all to enjoy food and fellowship together.

We welcome members of the congregation and anyone from our communities.

We serve soup from 12.30 -1.00pm. Please encourage family, friends and neighbours to come along and enjoy soup and company.

Soup is free but feel free to make a small donation if you wish.

Lesley

HEBREWS 11

Earlier this summer, my sister started to research our family tree. Many WhatsApp family discussions were had, and details of our ancestors were shared. I said that I would research our maternal line, as I am named after my Mum's mum, Jeanette Ethel Stanley Cunningham (néé Wells) born on the 8th September 1917, Chicago Illinois. I know little about her apart from her mother, Elizabeth Cowe, somehow travelled to the US, met George Wells, married and had my grandmother. I have Jeanette's birth certificate and an entry on a ship's manifest for Elizabeth and baby Jeanette between New York and Liverpool, May 1918.

After some research I still have not found much information about my American great-grandfather apart from where they lived when Jeanette was born and that he was listed as a barber. I have been a little more successful with Elizabeth's ancestors and can confidently trace back as far the late 18th century. Names of people I have never met but somehow are part of what makes me, 'me'.

It reminds me of Hebrews 11, in which the author says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval." v. 1-2. Then, starting with Abel, the writer goes through our spiritual ancestors. Some are named and some aren't. Men and women who trusted God in the most difficult of times. As we look through the names and their situations, the writer then uses our reflection on those who have gone before us and turns our attention forwards. It says "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)

The fact that so many kept going, should encourage us to trust God and to keep going, though life is fraught with sadness and pain. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus because he is faithful and will be with us every step of the way.

Jeanette



Small boy to a Sunday school teacher:

"When you die, God takes care of you like your parents did when you were alive — only God doesn't yell at you all the time."



ITEMS FOR PRAYER FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

*Prayers don't have to be long and eloquent. They need only come from a **sincere and humble** heart*

People

- ❖ Our minister Rev Nelu Balaj
- ❖ Our probationer minister Jeanette Wilson
- ❖ Our New Treasurers
- ❖ Our Fabric Convener John Anthony
- ❖ Our new Session Clerks
- ❖ Each member and their families
- ❖ Those who are housebound
- ❖ The bereaved
- ❖ Those who are ill at home or in hospital
- ❖ The poor in our parish
- ❖ The list is endless

Activities

- Thrift Shop
- Soup lunches
- Bible Studies
- Sunday Jam Club
- Wednesday Art Club
- Craft Groups
- Coffee morning
- Guild
- Volunteers required for all of these

We might not all be able to be upfront workers but all of us can support our church and its work through our prayers and encouragement

If you would like us to remember anyone in special need, please contact the minister.

Sadie Elliott.

ARE BIRTHDAYS A GOOD IDEA?



Quite a few years ago, I was asked to take part in a Christian Aid Week Service. A script, supplied by CA, was read for our congregations at both the Old Kirk and St Andrew's. It was built upon the theme of 'Grannies' and whether members reckoned that they were, "A useful bit of kit", this reflecting the jargon of the time. "Hands up if you believe they are", I asked. The result? - Overwhelming: grannies were handy to have around!

Now, in August 2024, I am going to ask if birthdays are UBKs in the same way; ignoring for the moment that a birthday is not "Kit" precisely. According to one's viewpoint, a BIRTHDAY is either a blessed gift.....or it is relegated to the trash can. Talking about that, I bet that the Trash Can Monster and the Cookie Monster - both brilliant creations - had a lot of time for birthdays.

You can tell from all this that I enjoy these special anniversaries. In my case, this is just as well as I have had plenty of them to celebrate and I am going to tell you about a coming birthday which I am going to celebrate not once but twice. That's downright unfair squeal all those who have the sad misfortune to be come into the world on the 29th February and can have a proper celebration only once in four years. Those that hate birthdays are very happy to be Leap Year Babies. It keeps the nonsense to an absolute minimum. My parents, a long time ago, saw to it that I would be a Summer Baby, with a proper birthday once every year and in the Summer Holidays, as well.

This year, greedy pig that I am, I will celebrate it twice on the same day. When I was 12, eighty years ago, I was given a book as a birthday present. I treasured this particularly because it was written in a really special and magical way. Indeed, it is about a magician and how he played host to a couple of children whom he had invited to lunch. The book is called "My Friend Mr Leakey" and it was written by Professor J B S Haldane. Originally published in 1937, it went through many editions.

Some years ago, I loaned my copy to a friend and it was never returned being, no doubt, read to bits by his children. Now, to commemorate being given this book as a 12th birthday gift, I am to be given it again on my 92nd birthday; not by my parents, God rest their souls but by my daughter and her husband. An identical copy and with the same picture on the cover depicting the magician Mr Leakey and his pet dragon.

Does this suggest that I am about to embark upon a second childhood? Safe to say that I never really left my first one.....and I can recall, with photographic clarity, lots of events from when I was two and three years old. I was often on a motorbike, sandwiched between two uncles. So, we will celebrate once more my 12th birthday and also my 92nd. Must be doing something right!

Tom Inglis

AND FINALLY OF BUFFALOES AND STOOKIES



Alone, bound hand and foot, lying in the middle of a Nigerian track, I watched as a large herd of African Buffalo paced slowly but inexorably towards me. It was not a good look and my trampling under many hooves would not improve it.

Do I have your attention? – Then I'll begin.

It was 1968 and I was serving as the lowest of the low – an Engineer Apprentice – aboard the SS H*****; a small oil tanker tramping the more interesting parts of the globe.

An Engineer Apprentice might have many qualities – even a few good – but most of us shared a willingness to subvert authority, follow our curiosity to dangerous extremes and learn to pick the lock of the Chief Steward's Dry Store. In short, we were normal 18 years old youths, far from home, always hungry and making the most of our limited freedom wherever possible.

My personal freedom was presently constrained by an injured ankle, the result of sliding down steel ladder handrails with insufficient braking applied at the bottom. It was agreed that I should be sent ashore to a hospital near the Nigerian port at which we lay but a problem was the acute angle of the gangway.

It was decided that my carriage ashore should be an exercise in the use of the Neil - Robertson stretcher. This was partly because it provided casualty-handling training, partly because it bore an element of danger (for me) and partly because it promised some fun (not for me). Of these three, I suspect the second and third were uppermost in most minds.

For those who do not know, a Neil-Robertson stretcher consists of a canvas wrapper longitudinally stiffened by wooden battens. Wrapped around a casualty, it is secured by straps and is used to extricate casualties from confined spaces. Once wrapped within the stretcher, the occupant is effectively in a straitjacket.



Using a davit, the stretcher and I were hoisted off the deck, swung outboard and over the water twixt ship and shore. I was aware at this point of a discussion between some crewmembers of the possibility of - accidentally - dunking me in the water just short of the dockside. Fortunately, the Mate, a man of many qualities, most of which were discussed outwith his hearing, cut short the discussion. Maybe this was because of sympathy but more likely because of the paperwork involved should my person be dipped into the crocodile-inhabited waters.

Eventually, I was landed onto the dockside and into the care (?) of a fellow apprentice and a Junior Engineer. They carried me, still in the stretcher, to a nearby deserted road, laid me down and departed to find the agent and his car to transport us to the hospital.

Lying in the road, nothing was to be heard but the chirping of birds and insects. It was very peaceful. That peace was broken by the sound of shuffling hooves and this is where the herd of African Buffalo came in.

Wikipedia tells me that a single buffalo can weigh over half a ton and has very large horns. I don't know about the weight but the horns were very real and looming ever nearer. The buffalo were close enough for me to detect halitosis when shouts from invisible herdsman rang out and the buffalo suddenly wheeled right and through the previously unseen gate of a nearby compound. My relief was immense. Death by Buffalo had been averted! Unfortunately for the buffalo, their fate was less cheerful; the compound was an abattoir....

Eventually, transport was located, I was extricated from the stretcher and we proceeded to the hospital.

The Biafran War was in progress and, as the hospital grounds held many wounded soldiers, I expected some delay. Happily, I was attended to quite quickly and this may have been helped by my uniform bearing rank insignia with some faint resemblance to an army brigadier's. (I did not pull rank!) My ankle was declared to be broken and many hands made light work of applying a plaster 'stookie' before I was discharged.

Back to the ship with an excellent reason for being excused any manual labour for a while. Boarding was easier, as by now the ship was loaded and the gangway negotiable.

My joy at being relieved of manual work was short-lived as the Chief Engineer decided that I would function as his clerk. It was a decision he probably regretted when reviewing my one-finger typing on pages heavy with Tippex and on which the text often ran off the edge of the page.

Two weeks later, we were in Curaçao, Netherlands West Indies, where a Dutch doctor removed the stookie and declared that I had never had anything more serious than a sprain! I returned aboard with a suitably luridly embellished description of my injury, donned my boiler suit and descended into the engine room by sliding down the steel ladder handrails.....

My descent was noted by the Second Engineer (ranked inferior only to God in every Engine Room) who advised me of my fate, in a highly descriptive manner, if he ever caught me sliding down the handrails again. I took the hint.

Barry McKay



