

this time King George and Queen Mary paid an annual visit to the Macintosh of Macintosh at Moy Hall, Inverness, and on this day they were proceeding from Moy Hall to Balmoral Castle. For us in those days and at that time it was a great event.

With the coming of the internal combustion engine life changed. Take the servants for instance. The normal drill was for the milking and feeding of the cattle to be done early, the herd or herds let out to the fields, breakfast with special prayers seeing it was the Lord's day, then preparations for the kirk. If I was around, I would be the one sent out to the moor to bring in the mare, Polly, always an agreeable chore for me. I would stable her and give her a modest feed and drink, then while I went to put on my Sunday best, the others having already done so, she would be harnessed and yoked to the brake.

Around 11 am she and the brake would be brought out to the road and the cry would be raised, "We're ready." Great Aunt Bella, my mother and any other lady who was biding at the Middleton would descend in state at a slow pace, then climb into the rear section of the vehicle. Great Uncle Charlie would mount the driving seat and my father and I would fit in along the bench, bringing up the storm rug over our knees. Tweed, the collie, would take up position underneath the brake. The four or five mile drive up the Glen would be done at a stately pace never overtaking any other vehicle but, as we overtook pedestrians, Uncle Charlie would check the mare, a mere technical effort, and in passing we would have a gossip with them.

On arrival at the kirk the ladies would descend. They would find other worshippers to have a word with. We would drive over to the stable, Tweed would be tethered to a post, the mare would be unyoked and guided into a stall but not unharnessed although she would be given some oats from a bag carried underneath the vehicle. Then we would enter the kirk.

Cray Kirk was United Free Church of Scotland, which meant it was a breakaway church from the Church of Scotland. At the time of which I write or speak it was about 50 or 60 years old. Who had designed it I do not know, but its layout, semi-circular with a sloping floor and rising tiers of pews, made me think that the architect had had in mind a Scottish covenanting conventicle in the hills with the minister there in the pulpit in front there looking up at his congregation. Preachers were greatly esteemed and accurately assessed on the time length of their sermons. The little harmonium did its best to direct our singing.

Everyone was in their Sunday best and exhibiting proper manners for the Sabbath. We were at least an hour and a half after the start when the real business of the day started. Ladies who had not seen each other for a week were gathered and exchanged their news. The men lit their pipes and swapped news

of beasts and crops and markets and of horsemen, cattlemen and loons and noted which of these had come to the kirk on foot or bicycle. Time stood still but eventually we got moving, Tweed was taken away from his noisy interchanges with other dogs, Polly would be brought out of the stable and Tweed stood under the brake and Dilly would be yoked. But there was no immediate move off, the ladies had talks to finish, the farmers had further news to exchange so it was rather late in the day when we drove home to a late dinner. Time served us, not us time. The Argyll changed all that.

Milking and feeding of animals was done at a quicker pace, breakfast and Sunday prayers were not exactly rushed, but not exactly extended. Instead of being sent out to the moor for the mare, I was given a duster and an order to wipe down the chassis of the Argyll with particular attention to the big brass headlights. In the yard, Great Uncle Charlie checked the radiator and looked knowingly at the engine and closed the bonnet. He came round to a position in the driving seat and played with the advance and retard arms which were set on the steering wheel. Then he swung the handle at the front of the vehicle, to start the engine. It failed to fire. He came round the vehicle and readjusted the settings of the advance and retard. He returned to the handle and swung again. This was repeated three or four times with intermediate priming up of the engine system. At last it fired. He raced around the car, stowed the handle and climbed into the driving seat, and drove the car out into the road shouting "It's going, it's going," then, "Come on, come on." The ladies, accustomed to dignified approaches, did not hurry, so he called again, "I don't want it to stall! Hurry, hurry!" They hurried. They entered the rear section of the Argyll sitting in state. A disconsolate Tweed, tethered in the yard, was abandoned. My father and I sat in front.

As we wended our way up the Glen we overtook horsedrawn brakes and passed pedestrians, calling out "We can't stop." We reached the kirk and parked it for a quick get away when we had finally achieved the firing of the engine after the service. Some collies looked in vain for Tweed. The ladies arriving in state swept in. The minister, in his sermon, talked of astonishing and bewildering advances. We humbly bent our heads and prayed that all would be well. After service the get together was condensed, because Uncle Charlie went straight to the Argyll, played with advance and retard, swung the handle and, was it a miracle? the engine fired. He yelled to us "Come on!" and the ladies did so. My father and I mounted the driving bench and we proceeded down the Glen without, on this occasion, having the opportunity to overtake vehicles or pedestrians, and we were early for dinner.

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