



RUSTIC RHYMES

BY RODGER





A pleasant way to pass the time
Stringin' blethers up in rhyme.

Index	Page
A Ceilidh of My Dreams	63
A Happy Nicht at Cortachy	59
Alyth Silver Jubilee 1st July 1972	32
Alyth Show 3rd July 1976	34
Atholl Wilson (Elegy)	24
Auld Scots Words	70
Autumn Tints	19
Bert Hogg, Ashintully	44
Birthday Greetings to the Queen Mother 1975	48
Bonnie Strathardle 9th June 1968	52
Boreland Ball	56
Burns Up To Date	61
Death of Buttercup	20
D.R. Menzies, Banker	25
Dundee Rep at Kirkmichael	57
Epistle to Francis Gay	36
Epistle to Jim Fairlie	19
Farewell to Fealar	9
From Glasgow to the Glen	49
Gathering in Verse 1977	38
Guide Isobel Cairns	26
James Downie, Auctioneer Par Excellence	41
Kirkmichael Ceilidh 28th July 1967	43
Letter to Kenneth McKellar	45
Presentation to Mrs. C. Laird	68
Presentation to Miss Macgregor	17
Sandy Robertson (Equine Enthusiast)	54
Six Horse Hitch	30
S.N.P. Social Night	14
Strathardle Gathering 1968	15
Strathardle Gathering 1970	23
Strathardle Gathering 1972	28
Television at Christmas 1976	47
Thanks at Christmas	39
The Auld Days	31
The Immortal Memory	1
The Lass O' Jordanhill	35
Toast to J.G. Gordon MRCVS	7
To a Moose (Modern Version)	54
Winnie Cooper Judging	11

THE IMMORTAL MEMORY

In the Shire of Ayr near Alloway
A bairn first saw the licht o' day,
A brisk and bouncing dark eyed boy
Destined to be Auld Scotland's joy.

His parents were of humble birth,
His father toiled and tilled the earth;
He ran a croft and did some jobbin'
And named his little laddie "Robin".

Although born in this lowly station
Rob got a decent education.
Old William Burness was no fool,
He sent his children to the school.

His dad had married late in life
An active and much younger wife;
Our hero was the first born young yin
Of this historic, rustic union.

He proved to be in course of time
An expert at the perfect rhyme;
His verses loved by one and all
In humble cot and stately Hall.
An ardent Scottish patriot too
This laddie born to "haud the ploo".

'Twas in the golden harvest time
That Rab was first inspired to rhyme.
A girl, (Kilpatrick was her name),
Who set his youthful heart aflame.

She made his young blood boil and sizzle
When from her hand he picked a thistle;
He tried in rhyme his love to tell
And wrote the poem "Handsome Nell".

In youth to Irvine toon he gaed
To learn the great flax-dressin' trade
But there he met disaster dire
And lost all in a raging fire.

So back he came to help with zeal
His brother Gilbert in Mossiel,
His pen now had a busy time,
A veritable spate of rhyme.

Thrang skelpin at it ilka day
Wi' poems sad and poems gay,
Much of his work so truly grand
Was made while working on the land.

While plooin' rigs or hairstin' corn
Many a famous verse was born,
Tho' by misfortune often vexed
He looked to Nature for his text.

He took plain, simple, common objects
And used them as poetic subjects,
A moosie's nest, crushed in the furr,
A daisy buried in the stoor.

The louse he spied on Jenny's haid
While in the Kirk she sat and prayed.
Yet from these poems great lines have come
Still used today in many a home -

"O, wad some poe'er the giftie gie us
Tae see coorsels as ithers see us".
And quoted o'er and o'er again
"The best laid schemes o' mice and men".

A kind hert thumped in Rabbie's briest
Richt fond was he o' bird and beast.
The wee birds crouchin' in the thicket
When wintry winds blaw snell and wicked.

He wrote about a "wounded hare"
And Maggie the auld farmer's mare,
How she received some extra corn
To "hansel" her on New Year's morn.

2

I often read with pleasure keen
The merry poem "Halloween".
The canty, couthy, country folks
Burnin' their nuts and pu'in stocks
And many another magic rite
Upon that last October night.

He told how "Man was Made to Mourn"
And wrote o' bold "John Barleycorn",
And that domestic scene so bright
The saintly "Cottar's Saturday Night".
He wrote in rhyme "Tam Samson's End"
And sent "Advice to his Young Friend"

"To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile
Assiduous wait upon her
To gather gear by every wile
That's justified by honour
Not for to hide it in a hedge
Nor for a train attendant
But for the glorious privilege
Of being Independent."

And that advice, I'm safe to say
Is still appropriate today.

Among the Edinburgh gentry
He made a meteoric entry
But soon forsook Auld Reekie toon
And hastened back to Ayr again.

Wi' a diamond ring he wrote on windies,
He planned to set off for "The Indies"
But luckily a respite came
And thank The Lord he stayed at hame.
And kept on writing with a will
Those poems that charm the world, still.

4

He wrote about the "Brigs o' Ayr"
And that strange scene "The Holy Fair".
How "Duncan Gray cam' here tae woo",
And on the death of his pet ewe.
A poem couched in language rich
When "Mailie" cowpit in the ditch.

He fairly warmed some factors lugs
In his great tale o' yon "Twa Dugs".
And really made the verses clink
In his description of "Scotch Drink".

A great farewell song he composed
To sing when social nights are closed.
Before the homeward roads are ta'en
The world famous "Auld Lang Syne".

It's true that Rabbie liked a glass,
No doubt he also liked a lass,
But charmed wi' love, or cheered by wine
His pen wrote many a famous line.

He wrote in a poetic fever
Great poems that will last for ever
His sweet love songs men's hearts have dirled
In every corner of the world.

In Russia and China too
His songs have thrilled men through and through,
They've been translated too, by jingo!
To nearly every foreign lingo.

Nae nicht wi' Burns would be complete
Without that great poetic treat;
That gruesome, ghostly, eerie canter
The midnight ride o' "Tam o' Shanter".
An entertaining, fateful tale
How Tammie's Maggie lost her tail!

3

"O' a' the airts the wind can blaw"
"A Health to them that's far awa'",
"A Rosebud by His Early Walk"
And Death on "Hornbook" havin' a talk.
He wrote an anthem too, one day,
The patriotic "Scots Wha Hae".

Rab did enjoy a social night
With music, songs and frolic bright.
At dancing classes he took lessons
And at Farbolton joined "The Masons".

He led a merry social life
And shortly had to take a wife.
When he was still quite young he wed
A much sought after local maid.
An amorous warm hearted charmer
And ye a' ken her name - "Jean Armour".

I'd like to speak for a wee willie
Aboot the elder Holy Willie,
This Willie Fisher was a sneak
Who liked to prowl and pry and keek.

Aye on the watch for hough ma gandie
Or folk who drank ower muckle brandy
If any local lass grew ill
And felt inclined to boak her kail

Willie would run to tell the tale
To Daddy Auld.
To mount the dreaded Cutty Stool
The lass was called.

But Holy Willie fell from grace
And caused a scandal in that place.
He was suspected of seduction
And pilfering the Kirk collection.
When "Rab the Rhymmer" heard the tale
He gave auld Holy Willie hell,
He lashed him wi' a fierce tirade,
The cruellest poem ever made,
It castigated Willie sair
The satire "Holy Willie's Prayer".

5

When our great Scottish singers flee
To far-off lands across the sea,
In foreign towns, no matter where,
They're sure to find some Scots folk there.

The songs for which the exile yearns
Are aye the songs o' Rabbe Burns.
I think the best-loved one of those
"My love is like a Red Red Rose".

How it would please that plooman feller
To hear it sung by Ken McKellar,
Or wistful "Mary Morrison"
By Ian Wallace, baritone.

Or the "Bonnie Lass o' Ballochmyle"
By Bill McCue in sparkling style,
"Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon",
A bonnie song, a bonnie tune.
The exiles love to hear it done
By dulcet Moira Anderson.
"The Deil's Awa'" wi plenty go
And sad "John Anderson my Jo".

And I would like to add to those
One based on Nancy McIlhose,
The World's finest love song this,
The sweet and tender "Ae Fond Kiss".

O' bairns he had more than his share
But nurtured them with tender care,
He ruled them with a gentle rod
And reared them in the fear of God.

I wish he could look in tonight
To see this company so bright,
This cosy room so snug and warm
And all you girls full of charm.
And handsome fellows met this E'en
To keep his memory ever green,
The best Scots poet by a mile
This plooman laddie born in Kyle.
Whene'er his natal day returns
Let us remember Robert Burns.

6

By nicht and day he was on call,
He gave a service prized by all,
If he was sent for, you'd be sure
He would arrive within the oor.
If any beastie was off colour
He very soon could spot the dolour,
His diagnosis swift and sure
He nearly always wrocht a cure.
His car boot was aye fully stockit,
Sometimes he had a job to lock it,
Wi' medicines for various ills,
Drenches, capsules, pootheres, pills.
Forbye a multitude o' gibbles
For ovine, bovine, equine troubles.
Needles and threed for sewin' cuts,
Trocars for stabbin' swollen guts,
For hackit tits he had a salve,
For tetany a flutter-valve,
The results he got were really great
Usin' calcium boro-gluconate.
Another job he had great skill in
Injectin' shots o' penicillin.
He could cure pneumonia in sheep,
Relieve a coo choked wi' a neep,
And file an ancient horse's tooth
Thus helping to renew its youth.
For long he's been proficient too
At ropin' steers wi' a lasso!
Whether he was dehornin' nowt
Or operatin' on a cowt
He buckled tae wi' richt guid-will
And did the job wi' speed and skill.

At many a bovine birth he assisted
When calves were comin' wrang and twisted,
A goodly number owed their life
To Gordon's Caesarean knife.
Post-mortems too he whiles conductit
To find oot why beasts "kicked the bucket",
Also that vilest job on earth
Removing retained afterbirth.

8

At farming, Rabbe had no luck,
His livestock pined, his crops got stuck,
To change his job he thought was wise
And got employment with "The Excise".
He ranged o'er Scotland's southern bounds
His wage per annum, fifty pounds!
Though poor in health and wracked wi' pain
Rab never laid aside his pen,
"O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast"
Was written as he neared his last.

In honour of Miss Jenny Lewars
Who nursed him in his dying oors.

Still under forty, sad to say,
This gifted genius passed away;
The world's finest rhymer yet
We'll be forever in his debt.

Now lying at eternal rest
Entombed within Dumfries,
There never was, before or since,
A poet such as this.

Now let us show our high regard
For Scotland's famous well loved Bard,
Stand up and drink a toast wi' me
To His Immortal Memory.

TOAST TO J.G. GORDON, M.R.C.V.S. AT HIS
RETIRAL PRESENTATION, ENVERDALE HOTEL, 16.5.79

From Elgin Toon up in the North
A brisk young fellow sallied forth;
To Blair, Fate sent his footsteps farin',
He started work wi' William Nairn.
For several years he assisted well
Then took the practice o'er himsel'.

7

His practice covered baith oor Glens
And quite a chunk o' Strathmore's Plains,
Oor Vet in high esteem is held
From Coupar Angus to Dunkeld.
He specialised in treatin' dogs
And gave them a' their needfu' jags,
Vaccines for each disease he had
Such as distemper and hard pad.
He picked oot thorns frae canine paws,
And trimmed back over-grown claws,
And if a beast was ower far gane
He kindly put it oot o' pain.
Like many other country vets
He held a surgery for pets,
A lot o' folk cam' doon frae Blair
To put their "darlings" in his care.
This range of pets was really big,
Great Dane, Budgie, Guinea-Pig.
Those clients were aye glad they came
For Grant could send them happy hame.

For well nigh forty years he's slaved
And many a precious life he's saved,
But noo he's giein' up his work
And leavin' his braw place "Heath Park"
And goin' back up to Findhorn
The countryside where he was born.
We wish him many happy oors
Tendin' his bonny plants and flooers,
And enjoying pleasant days afloat
Sailin' on his bonnie boat.

Let's drink a Toast, Honour awardin'
To our retiring Vet, Grant Gordon.

THE MACPHERSONS' FAREWELL TO FEALAR

In a braw Hotel that's called Aldchlappie
A party met baith sad and happy,
To say farewell and drink a jar
Wi' Nan and Henry o' Fealar.

9

A bright and warm cosy room,
A contrast to the outside gloom,
The fun was glorious, fast and hearty,
I ne'er enjoyed a finer party.

Harold's elbow jinked and diddled
Young George accompanied as he fiddled,
The Danube Blue for me he played,
The finest waltz tune ever made.

No words o' mine can e'er express
My pleasure in that tune by Strauss,
Jock Webster's voice in perfect tune
Charmed wi' The Banks and Braes o' Doon.

Stewart the Gaffer told a tale
That made the ladies' cheeks turn pale,
Some parts of it were mildly shocking
About the lasses' legs and stocking.

Bonella from Dalmunzie came
A tall swank chap o' sheepdog fame,
Sandy Grant wi' golden locks,
The owner o' great Blackface flocks.
Dinah too, all bright and gay,
And young Diana and Jim Gray.

Rab and twa Jims, Glenferate herds,
Cam' doon to pay their kind regards,
'Big Pete' cam' o'er to hae a tear,
He stands near seven feet in the air.
A couple frae the Carse o' Gowrie,
And Nurse and Vera frae Blairgowrie.

Connie frae the Borland Farm
Looking bonnie, fu' o' charm,
Anither lad that thocht 'twas guid
Blairgowrie slater Robert Reid.

10

A young judge cam' frae Aiberdeen,
A bonnie fair-haired lass,
Wi' in-born skill and eagle een
She sorted oot each class.

She beckoned sheep into the ring
And some cam' wi' a bound;
She studied heads and horns and legs
And saw if they walked sound.

A well-built lass o' medium size,
Neither big nor tiny;
This expert judge o' black-faced sheep
From "Ord Farm" up at Rhyndie.

She wore a tasteful, stylish dress,
Brown shoes upon her feet;
A gay head-square upon her tress,
She really looked a treat.

She studied sheep from front and rear,
And played it really cool;
She ran her hands o'er every beast
To analyse its wool.

A thorough judge as e'er I saw,
A gifted girl in sooth,
She sometimes gripped ane by the nose
And lookit at its mooth!

Ewes and gimmers, rams and lambs,
She took them in her stride;
You couldnae find a sounder judge
In a' the country-side.

A lively beast almost escaped
When o'er the fence it stottit,
But Chic her cousin was at hand
And expertly he caught it.

She sized sheep up, yowe, lamb and tup,
Their colours, points and feet,
Then wi' firm thumps upon their rumps
Selected her short leet.

12

Mrs. Wilson (cooking done),
Cam ben the hoose to join the fun.
Muriel and Jim McRae
Fairly helped to make my day.
Louisa, young quiet wee lass,
Filled up many a jug and glass.

As usual when the pleasure's guid
The meenits wing their way wi' speed.
I got a most surprising shock
When someone said "It's ane o'clock".

Around the pair we formed a ring
"Good Fellows" heartily did sing.
The wish of every person there
"God speed this couple from Pealar".

ON WINIFRED COOPER JUDGING BF SHEEP AT ALYTH
6.7.74

Last Saturday was dull but dry
Wi' very little sun,
But thankfully for Alyth Show
It stayed quite fair abune.

One o' my annual holidays,
A place I always go,
The finest stock in a' the land
Are seen at Alyth Show.

I parked my car no' very far
From the refreshment tent,
Then o'er to see the black-faced sheep
Right eagerly I went.

A record entry for the Show,
The quality was grand,
The best line-up o' shearlin' tups
You'll see in a' Scotland.

11

She made a rank along the fank,
Their quality was braw,
Then shot oot the inferior lot
And they were ta'en awa'.

The best six were released again
To ha'e another look,
Then finally her choice was made
And entered in the book.

Enormous entries in each class,
For any judge a test;
But this young, skilful Rhyndie lass
Worked on without a rest.

Cool, calm, unruffled and relaxed,
So sweet and neat and dainty;
Although approaching thirty years
She looks no more than twenty!

A thorough, conscientious job,
No random, rash selection;
The thoughts of all flock-masters there
Her work was sheer perfection.

I'll aye mind o' this bonnie lass,
A charming, lo'esome kimmer,
She gave the great supreme award
To Davy Nicoll's gimmer.

Her Mum sat in the gallery,
A handsome, white-haired dame,
But her advice was never socht,
She could have stayed at hame!

I'll aye mind o' that Alyth Show
And even in my sleep
My brightest dreams will ever be
O' "Winnie" judgin' sheep.

13

S.N.P. SOCIAL NIGHT, MOORFIELD HOTEL 3.5.74

I'll tell ye o' a happy nicht,
A merry, cheery spree,
In Nicholson's Moorfield Hotel,
Wi' Blair Branch S.N.P.

That nicht I hurried through my wark,
The sky was clear and fair,
I donned a suit and a clean sark,
Then held awa' tae Blair.

This function was supported well,
Around two hundred strong
Were gathered there to banish care
And pass the time along.

Although a dance band had been booked.
Alas! they ne'er appeared,
But some obliging lads were there
Who quickly volunteered.

We've clever instrumentalists
In and around Blairgowrie,
The Livingstones, Bill Cormack, Work,
And Donald wi' his Lowrey.

Tall Kenny Beaton was in charge,
Of fear-an-tighes the best,
He kept the programme running well
And welcomed every guest.

Some of Freda's pupils danced,
Young, soopple, fleet and lithe,
Wi' twinklin' toes and heels they pranced
To tunes by Charlie Blyth.

Belle Stewart and Cathie topped the bill,
Two stars o' high degree,
Weel kent baith in their native land
And far across the sea.

14

Belle charmed us with her glorious voice
In many an auld Scots air,
A special treat her famous song
"The Berryfields o' Blair".

She never deals in risqué smut,
Her songs and tales are clean,
An entertainer of good taste,
"Auld Rattray's" uncrowned queen.

Another highlight of that night
Which brought smiles to each face,
A great duet by Chay and Don
The sweet "Amazing Grace".

The "midzer" plentiful and good,
Nae wishy-washy trash,
But loaded plates of wholesome food,
Bangers and tasty mash.

A quiet attentive audience,
Nae arguments or strife.
Doug Crawford from Auld Reekie came
Wi' his attractive wife.

She gracefully performed a task
Drawin' tickets from the raffle.
The articles were numerous,
To name them a' would baffle.

Wi' song and dance, and some romance,
The end too quickly came,
Reluctantly we came away
And took the road for home.

STRATHARDLE GATHERING 1968

Strathardle Games have come and gone,
A happy day to look back on.
The sun shone bright the lee-lang day
From early morn till evening grey.

15

The cars streamed in, early and late,
They say it was a record gate.
The Captain used the speaker loud
To welcome that tremendous crowd;
Some people came from far away,
They even came from Tannochbrae!
To entertain that happy horde
A troop of dancers took the board,
They call themselves the "Gowrie" dancers
And, by jove! they were lively prancers.
"Big Wallace" from Strathmiglo came
To take part in the "heavy" game;
We've seen him often here before,
Each time he throws he gi'es a roar!
The bairns brought pets, some wee, some big,
The champion was a guinea pig.
Sheep and kye were great in number
(Some gates were smashed to heaps o' lumber!)
A comely lass from Kilry Hill
Paraded calves with grace and skill,
She wasnae very easy lickit
And captured many a first prize ticket.
Jimmy Scrimgeour judged the calves,
Thorough, ne'er daein' things by halves.
The exhibitors were friendly, pally,
The champion came from Steps o' Cally.
"Blackwater" won the Robertson Cup,
Tough lads and dour, they ne'er gie up,
The Cup was filled and emptied then
To cheer the strong lads in the Glen.
The Open Tug-o-War was keen,
A better contest ne'er was seen;
Strong, hefty men the pullers a'
Not a weaklin' there ava'.
Heavin', ruggin', strivin', roarin',
Their banes will a' be sair the morn!
Leitfie won after many fights,
Fred Shaw and the "Barron Knights".

16

PRESENTATION TO MISS CAROLINE MACGREGOR

Dear Friends, we're gathered here to-night
To honour and revere
A Lady who has just retired,
Our local teacher dear.

I met her many years ago,
We went to schule thegither;
A bonnie, cheery, pleasant lass,
We'd many a happy blether.

On closing days she treated us
To recitations great;
A favourite ane o' a' the class
"It wasnae his wyte he was late".

Three years or mair we studied there,
Then we went oor ain wye;
She went in for teachin'
And I went in for kye!

She loved to live in Ardle vale,
A lucky lass was she;
She got a job in Kirky schule
Wi' Mr. Muckersie.

In course of time when he went off
To teaching further north,
She got this vacant teaching post
And fairly proved her worth.

Tho' bairns were surly, dull and dour
She handled them with ease;
Ay, even during World War II
Wi' Glesca 'vacuees.

I thank her for a job well done,
Her rule was always fair;
She taught my daughters and my son
Ere they went doon tae Blair.

17

The high-light of the scholars' year
The merry Christmas party;
Wi' fun and games for old and young
And commisariat hearty.

A pleasant sight for parents then
Watching the children playin' -
The boys and girls got lovely gifts,
Their dogs a' got a bane.

Of great tact and diplomacy
Trying every one to please,
How glad we were to see her name
Among the new J.P.'s.

Her pupils now o'er a' the airts
Are mostly daein' weel
Thanks mainly to the proper start
They got at "Kirky" school!

An expert on the many trees
That grow in Ardle Glen,
She'll also name each plant and flower
And how they'll bloom and when.

A pastime fine for Caroline
In weather bright or foggy;
A feature of our village scene
Oot walkin' wi' her doggie.

We wish her joy in her new hoose,
That pleasant, cosy bield,
A wee bit doon the Colty road
O'er lookin' Bannerfield.

And many happy, peaceful years,
Devoid o' pain or rigour;
A lady whom I'm proud to know,
Miss Caroline MacGregor!

18

Convince folk wi' sound arguments,
Discuss things fair and squarely;
Show them the wisest thing to do
Is Vote for Jimmy Fairlie.

Never try quirks or dirty tricks
But aye fight clean and purely,
And on the great Election Day
Win many votes securely.

Though hecklers quiz and badger you
And try your temper sairly,
Just keep your cool for you're no fool,
Be patient Jimmy Fairlie.

You'll likely find the going hard
And sometimes dine but sparely,
But what a glorious, rich reward
A Win for Jimmy Fairlie!

Before I quit this mundane scene
And enter portals pearly,
I'd love to see in West Dundee
As M.P. Jimmy Fairlie.

You'll put Auld Scotland on the map
And win her great renown;
I hope to see for S.N.P.
A score in London Town.

Regret I cannae help ye mair
Being elderly and puirly,
But I'll wish you the Very Best,
"Good Luck" to Jimmy Fairlie.

DEATH OF "BUTTERCUP"

My heart with grief and sorrow bled
To learn that "Buttercup" was dead.
Tonight I'll try to court "The Muse"
And write about that Queen o' coos.
I'll base it on the words you said

20

AUTUMN TINTS

I'd like to write a wee bit story
About our country's Autumn glory.
Hedges, copsewood, tree and bush
Painted by Nature's magic brush.
A highlight of our rural scene
The blood-red glory of the gean,
The poplar leaves are lemon tinted,
The rowan trees seem scarlet painted.
The dying bracken on the braes
Claddens the eye with golden blaze.
Laburnum trees and maples too
Are gaily decked in many a hue.
The birken shaws and hazel glades
Provide some lovely pastel shades.
The Blackcraig woods are all aglow
With a breathtaking mottled show,
Scarlet, crimson, bronze, cerise
And brilliant colours such as these;
Saffron, fawn, and buff and brown,
A multi-coloured sylvan gown.
A sicht tae cure the sairest e'en
That variegated, vivid scene.
This feast of colour gives us reason
To bless our brilliant Autumn season.

EPISTLE TO JIMMY FAIRLIE ON HIS SELECTION AS S.N.P. P.P.C. FOR DUNDEE WEST

I read some news the other day,
Grand news that pleased me rarely;
The S.N.P. in West Dundee
Have chosen Jimmy Fairlie.

Whenever the Election comes,
Be it late or be it early;
I hope to see a new M.P.
In my friend Jimmy Fairlie.

19

And make the rest up in my head.
We've lost kye too, and had sair he'rts
To see them leave on knackery cairts.
But to my tale, a wee bit story
On Buttercup's departed glory.
On summer days she loved to graze
On Donafuil's green grassy braes.
Then in the byre at evening cool
She always filled the pitcher full.
The most considerate of kye
She kept her bedding clean and dry.
Her udder seldom needed washin',
She stood well back for each bowel motion.
Her coat was smooth and never starin'
Nor claggered up wi' clarty shairn.
She never kicked nor cowped the pail
Nor smirched your neck wi' loaded tail;
She always calved wi' little bother
And extra calves she'd foster mother.
To her fond mistress she was dear,
She bred a grand calf every year,
Never sorry, never sick,
The pride of Hilary and Dick.
I could write till my pen ran dry
About this Paragon of kye.
Her eyes were always clear and bright,
She had a healthy appetite,
Ate everything that came her way,
Silage, turnips, cobs and hay.
Her hair was soft and smooth as silk,
She gave rich, sweet and creamy milk,
She kept the household in supply
And never went a long time dry.
A well-bred cow of common sense,
She never jumped a dyke or fence,
Quiet and couthie, well behaved,
Except when for a mate she craved.
Then she would charge around and rowt
And upset all the other nowt;
With hot desire she roared and ranted
Until her urgent wish was granted,
Then she would settle, quite content
To start another nine month stent.

21

She never suffered colds or dolours,
 Aye passed her tests wi' flying colours,
 The test for dread tuberculosis
 And its companion brucellosis.
 Alas! Alack! there came a day
 When Buttercup's good health gave way,
 A very bad time she was having
 With a prolonged, exhausting calving.
 Instead of everything going fine
 The head was twisted, out of line.
 At last with skilful care and labour
 Assisted by a helpful neighbour
 A strong calf you brought forth alive
 And hoped the mother would survive,
 But with the efforts she was beat
 And couldnae get up on her feet.
 Anxiety took over now
 You feared you'd lose your precious cow.
 The local vet the case attended,
 But, Woe is me! he couldnae mend it,
 "Her heart is bad, likewise her liver,
 I fear the old girl won't recover".
 You nursed her with solicitude
 And tried her with all kinds of food,
 Then physicks, drenches, tonics, pills,
 And other cures for bovine ills.
 Her eyes grew dull, her flesh fell in,
 Her ribs were showing through her skin,
 Your heart was bursting in your breast,
 With sorrow for your darling beast.
 In my mind's eye I think I see
 Her poor head resting on your knee,
 While you sat on a bale o' strae,
 And murmured a soliloquy.
 Despite your tender care and toil
 She shuffled off her mortal coil
 And laying down her weary head
 She closed her eyes among the dead.
 I hope a quey will soon turn up
 To take the place of Buttercup.
 This comes to you from an Old Timer
 A Sympathetic Rustic Rhymer.

22

'Twas worth while coming from afar
 To see the Ladies' Tug-o'-war;
 Strathardle girls won two good pulls
 And made their men-folk feel like fools.
 They did far better than the men,
 Blackwater won "The Cup" again!

Some had refreshment in the bars
 While others watched the "musical" cars.
 The entry large, but space was ample,
 Once more 'twas won by Willie Sample.
 The dance at night was truly grand
 In "Kirkie" Hall to Fairie's Band.

ATHOLL WILSON
 WHO PASSED AWAY VERY SUDDENLY 13.7.79

We've lost a very pleasant friend,
 His life came to a sudden end;
 No hint of pain, no warning bell,
 The stroke was swift and Atholl fell.

A handsome chap, of sturdy build,
 In tattie work extremely skilled,
 Many successful years he had
 Running a big Co-op tattie squad.

In summer days it pleased him fine
 To sally forth with rod and line;
 Every loch and stream he kent
 Where many happy hours were spent.

Many a night in warm weather
 He'd take a cat-nap 'mongst the heather,
 Then rising with the roseate dawn
 Right happily he'd fish right on.

With every type of fly well skilled,
 His basket was gey often filled
 With speckled beauties plump and rare
 To carry home with pride to Blair.

24

STRATHARDLE GATHERING 1970

The glen's "Big Day" is left behind,
 The Weather Clerk was fairly kind,
 In the late morning some rain fell,
 But after mid-day all was well;
 Although we never saw the sun,
 Thank goodness it stayed fair abun'.

At Sheep and Cattle Shows held here
 The quality improves each year.
 Ian MacDiarmid judged the ovines
 And Davie Sinclair placed the bovines.
 Exhibitors won many cups
 For coos and calves, and lambs and tups.

In various entertaining races
 Strathardle youngsters showed their paces,
 The competitions strong and he'rtly,
 Run by Jim Russell, "Hutch" and "Bertie".

A great turnout of "heavies" tae,
 The best we've had for many a day,
 The great shot-putter Arthur Rowe,
 A super-man wi' mighty throw.
 Tall Rob McEwan from Atholl side
 And Charlie Allan from Strathclyde.
 G. Forbes down from Glenlivet came,
 Blair bobby, Donald Ross, by name.
 Gordon McGregor, large as life,
 Young Charlie Balfour up from Fife.

Police dogs gave a great display,
 They held two criminals at bay;
 They brought them down while on the run
 Wi' little fear o' stick or gun.
 Obedience tests, jumps over boards,
 O'er hurdles, legs and then through girls;
 Applause spontaneous, long and fervent
 For police man and canine servant!

23

To lunch-time Ceilidhs oft he cam',
 He stood me many a social dram;
 We had a lot o' chats together,
 A friendly, pleasant, couthie blether.

Occasionally he'd sing a lilt,
 Resplendent in his tartan kilt,
 A pleasant chap to hear and see
 When singing of his wife Marie.
 Respected and well liked by all,
 Sore and sudden was the call;
 Fond memories he leaves behind,
 There are too few of Atholl's kind.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID R. MENZIES, ACCOUNTANT,
 ON HIS RETIRAL FROM BANK OF SCOTLAND,
 ABERFELDY, 19.5.78.

Dear Friends, we're gathered here tonight
 To honour David Menzies
 Who for the past twenty years
 Has worked so well among us.

Though roads were bad wi' slush and snaw,
 Or slippery wi' rime,
 Our hero overcam' it a'
 And aye got here in time.

Ae nicht a gale swept doon the vale
 And couped trees wi' the blast,
 But Dave tried several different roads,
 And managed through at last.

He organised great "Bothy Nichts",
 Wi' Sergeant Jim McGregor,
 And raised a vast amount o' cash,
 A really hefty figure.

These functions were supported well,
 A scene of great hilarity;
 The proceeds for a worthy cause
 A real deserving charity.

25

An able and obliging chap
Aye trying hard to please;
He assists the many local clubs
By guarding their bawbees.

An expert hand at Balance Sheets
And Income Tax Returns;
He does his duties modestly
Effusive thanks he spurns.

A lot of clients had sair he'rts
When to the Bank they came;
But Davie's help aye cheered them up
And sent them happy hame.

He's now retired from Banking life
And settled doon in Blair;
We hope that he and his guid wife
Will aye be happy there.

Whene'er they visit "Feldy Toon",
(I hope they often will come),
There's one thing they can count on here -
"A HEARTY HIGHLAND WELCOME".

TO ISOBEL CAIRNS, ASHINTULLY,
ON WINNING QUEEN'S BADGE FOR GIRL GUIDES

Last week there was a meetin',
A wheen o' pleasant oors;
At Duthie's o' "The Bleaton"
Among the azalea flooers.

A multitude assembled,
The atmosphere was hearty;
Folk said that it resembled
A Royal Garden Party.

Guides and Brownies on parade
With disciplined decorum;
A pleasant spectacle they made
In spotless uniform.

26

STRATHARDLE GATHERING 1972

The swiftly turning wheels of Time
Have made their annual round;
Once more our Show and Games were held
On our great Gathering ground.

Although the day was dull and drear
It kept quite fair abune;
A mighty crowd assembled there
To have some sport and fun.

The Show was much reduced this year,
In fact 'twas cut by half;
Plenty rams, and ewes and lambs,
But not a coo or calf.

The show of nowt is cancelled out,
Perhaps for one more year,
Till every herd in a' oor Glens
Is brucellosis clear.

As Jim MacFarlane placed each class
Results came loud and clear
From our great friend Jim Downie,
Blairgowrie's auctioneer.

A well-fleshed sheep came from Knowehead,
(She'll ne'er hae known hunger!)
A worthy champion she made
For stalwart Andy Younger.

The officials formed up in the Square
Near the old smiddy forge;
Then marched into the Bannerfield
Preceded by Sir George.

A lot of cameras were used
And many photos made
To capture for posterity
This colourful parade.

28

There was a guest of honour there,
"Guide Cairns" of Ashintully,
Who won the coveted "Queen's Badge"
And she deserved it fully.

Tea tables spread with dainty eats
Were set upon the sward
For guests and parents who had come
To witness this award.

The highest honour Guides can win,
It needs much preparation,
A score o' badges she had won
Before this great occasion.

Her Mum a working shepherd's wife,
The very best of mothers,
Fair Isobel a worthy Guide,
An example to all others.

A really dedicated Guide
Aye conscious of her duty;
The owner of a lovely voice
And fresh, young, golden beauty.

Her ruby lips like ripe rose hips
And shaped like Cupid's bow,
Her lustrous mane like golden grain
And teeth as white as snow.

May she go on from strength to strength,
Admired by all the Nation,
And show Guides what can be achieved
By grit and dedication.

I'm sorry I was absent
From this great celebration,
But write this with my compliments
And warm Congratulation.

27

A good turn-out of athletes came
From districts near and far,
To toss the caber, putt the stane,
And throw wechts o'er the bar.

Dundee Police gave a display
Wi' their Alsatian dugs,
Obedience tests, long jumps and high,
And bringing down two thugs.

A sleek black Labrador appeared
But disappointment got,
Wi' no game for retrieving there
Although it heard a shot!

A high-light o' the afternoon,
A thrill for ane and a',
A wee Jack Russell terrier
Thrang dribblin' wi'a ba'.

The Major commentating then,
Explained to us in jest
How this accomplished clever dog
Was trained by Georgie Best!

School-bairns did a historic dance
And made a splendid job
To music played by Charlie Smith
And Woodhill fiddler, Bob.

The local tug-o-war took place,
A most exciting battle,
Blackwater won the Robertson Cup
Filled from a whisky bottle!

A most delightful Gathering,
A pleasant time for all,
It finished with a cheery dance
Within Kirkmichael Hall.

29

SIX-HORSE HITCH
DRIVEN BY HUGH RAMSAY AT PERTH SHOW 4.8.79

On fourth of August, 'seventy-nine
A grand experience was mine,
I took a trip and made my way
To Perth's Fair City by the Tay.

I found my journey well worth while,
I saw Hugh Ramsay from Millisle,
A handsome, hefty, husky bloke
Exhibiting a six-horse yoke.

With harness bright and bells a-jingle
They fairly made the hert-strings tingle;
A sicht tae cure een that are sair,
Five gallant geldings and a mare.

As round the ring those Clydesdales sped
The South Inch trembled 'neath their tread,
They ambled, trotted, cantered, strolled,
And always perfectly controlled.

A great display of horsemanship
With quiet commands, no lashing whip,
A spectacle of grace and style
That beats Rolls-Royce cars by a mile.

With expertise Hugh fairly sparkled
As round the ring he weaved and circled;
Right well he graced the driving seat,
For equine lovers what a treat!

He had the "Fair Maid" in his crew,
Tom Clarke and "Chairman Roddy" too,
I'm sure the horses felt real proud
Pulling along that famous crowd.

When finally they faced The Stand
The applause was loud, prolonged and grand,
They well deserved that hearty cheer,
I hope they'll come again next year.

And many a night in bed I'll dream
Of Ramsay and his Six-Horse Team.

30

Sweet fancy cakes were seldom seen,
They cost ower muckle money,
But there was aye a rowth o' scones
And pancakes spread wi' honey.

The guid-wives kept their cupboards stocked
Wi' hame-made cheese and jam,
And whiles about a time o' rime
They'd get a "braxy" ham.

The bairns were sent tae earn bawbees
Tae help buy buits and duds,
At berry-pickin, drivin' grouse,
Or liftin' crops o' spuds.

ALYTH SILVER JUBILEE SHOW, 1st JULY 1972.

Now five and twenty years have run
Since Alyth Show was first begun,
And if you'll listen for a wee
I'll tell you o' this "Jubilee".

The Show was held last Saturday,
A pleasant, bright and breezy day;
Something there for every taste,
Pony, sheep and cattle baste.
Floral art a lovely treat,
Most artistic, tasteful, sweet.

'This year a special, great attraction,
The champions from each live-stock section
Were ranged on that delightful sward
All vieing for the top award.
Elimination ran its course
To Angus heifer, sheep and horse;
At last the Leicester made the grade
And then led off the Grand Parade.

32

THE AULD DAYS
LETTER TO BEN WRIGHT RE ABOVE

Dear Maister Wright, hoo weel ye write
On fowk o' yester-year,
Ye brocht a big lump tae ma throat
And tae ma een a tear.

The cottar folk were hardy stock
That fed on hamely farin',
They gave a priceless start in life
Tae mony a bonny bairn.

The cottar lasses left for schule
Wi' ribboned, weel-brushed tresses,
Their mitthers, clever wi' the shears,
Made many o' their dresses.

They seldom tasted butchers' beef
They never had the habit;
The men would set a wheen o' "girns"
And catch a fine plump rabbit.

They were a thrifty, weel-daein lot,
Their income wasnae big;
Their perquisites were meal and milk
And feedin' for a pig.

When fatted "Grumphy" met his death
Nothing was lost indeed,
The guid-wives used ilk orra scrap
For makin' potted heid.

I aince was telt tae kep the bluid
When I was juist a loon,
I must confess yon gory mess
Made me feel like tae swoon!

The pig it yelled, the bluid it welled,
While I the bowl was haudin',
And I knew in a day or two
We'd feast upon black puddin'.

31

A sicht tae cure the sairest een,
The finest tup I've ever seen;
"Weel-plantit", square, wi' carriage gay
Right gallantly it led the way,
Grand head and lugs, eyes bright as shillins,
This super sheep o' Morgan Milne's.
It must have filled his heart wi' glee
To win at this great "Jubilee".
A triumph for his shepherd too,
His prize was powerful mountain dew!

Grand sport was seen all afternoon,
Pat Lawson carried on the fun
Footing clean, nae signs o' glaur,
Fitba' races, tug-o-war.
Young dancers once again did well
To music played by Geordie Bell,
The J.A.C. lads made a splatter
When fillin' plastic bags wi' water!

A spectacle that pleased me fine
The gymnasts on the trampoline,
Bouncin' up and doon like puppets,
Their limbs as soople as a Whippet's,
Somersaultin' back and fore,
I never saw the like before.

There were some absent friends, Alas!
Nae Clydesdale horse and harness class.
A scarcity of tractors too,
Of entrants there were only two.
The standard of the stock was good,
Of Blackfaced sheep a multitude,
Many splendid entries there,
You'll no' see better anywhere.
A happy time was had by all,
A meeting place for many a pal;
Well-managed, lively, full of "go".
GOOD LUCK to next year's ALYTH SHOW!

33

On Third July, a week ago,
The roads all led to Alyth Show,
A multitude from all around
Assembled on that great Show Ground.
The sun's hot rays kept pourin' doon
From early morn till afternoon;
A lot o' chaps took off their sark
To sun bathe on that hard-baked park.
The beer tents did a lively trade,
Likewise ice-cream and lemonade.

A high-class show of all live stock,
The cream of many a herd and flock.
Big Shorthorn bulls with great broad backs,
And silken-coated Angus Blacks.
Huge Herefords with snow-white faces,
Cross cattle of mixed breeds and races.
A mammoth show of various dogs
Keen teams of experts clippin' hogs.
Gay light-legged ponies showed their paces,
Fleet school-bairns ran in many races.
The "Fancy Dress" a grand affair,
Lady Godiva herself was there!
Bairns of every age and size
And every one deserved a prize.

The Pageant was a great array,
The famed Pied Piper led the way,
He stood beside a hollowed mound
With children dancing all around.

34

Some folk prefer the emerald
With sparkling shade o' green,
There's lots o' gems and sequins too
In the "Come Dancing" scene.

The ruby too is popular
With its rich, blood-red colour,
The garnet is a relative,
But it is rather duller.

The onyx is a bonnie stone
Of rich translucent lustre,
It goes real well with other gems
In an engagement cluster.

The agate and the cairngorm
Are found on Scottish hills,
Whene'er gem hunters come on them
They have quite joyous thrills.

The amethyst is bonnie too
With its dark purple shade,
Hill drainers sometimes turn them up
When diggin' wi' a spade.

The opal is a favourite,
Of iridescent light,
And chalcedony thrills the eye
Translucent, bluish white.

But none o' these bright, sparkling gems
From river, mine or hill,
Can e'er outshine that lovely quine
The Lass o' Jordanhill!

EPISTLE TO FRANCIS GAY

Dear Francis Gay I'd like to say
Some words of Thanks to you
For all the sound advice you give
And all the good you do.

36

I'll now try to concoct a verse
About an ancient horse-drawn hearse
In which Glenisla folk were "hurled"
To start life in Another World.
From its dark, gloomy depths did glow
The trophies won at Alyth Show,
Till 3 o'clock they safely lay
In this unusual sanctuary,
Then out they came for presentation,
The high-light of this great occasion.
Mrs. Grant, "The Thorn" did the honours
And handed trophies to their winners,
Plus medals, gained for service loyal,
To Helen Cadger and Bob Lyal.

As to its end the programme neared
A sparkling aeroplane appeared,
'Twas piloted with verve and skill
And gave spectators many a thrill.
It dived and spiralled, rolled around
And kept us perfectly spellbound,
As if this wasnae thrills enough
Bold parachutists did their stuff,
Right skilfully they steered the thing
To land on target in the ring.
Then home we went our happy way
The end of another Perfect Day!

THE LASS O' JORDANHILL

"Diamonds are a girl's best friend"
So many people say,
The pearl is a precious gem,
There's many in The Tay.

The sapphire stone is highly prized,
Of lovely azure hue,
Well loved in an engagement ring,
A bonnie, bonnie blue.

35

You tell us there's a brighter side
To all our doubts and fears,
You help to soothe the widow's heart
And dry the orphan's tears.

Your helpful pen brings hope again
To many a weary bed,
And optimistic points the way
To better things ahead.

You straighten many an erring lad
When he has gone astray;
And prove to him convincingly
That crime can never pay.

Your friendly page can cheer old age
And drive away "Dull Care",
It brings new life to failing hearts
Although the end seems near.

You write of folk in humble ways
Doing noble deeds of valour,
Though living in environment
Of poverty and squalor.

How some girls forfeit wedlock's joys
To care for Mum or Dad,
Such faithfulness and loyalty
Makes us feel glad, yet sad.

How some folk bravely carry on
Though they've disabled been,
You write of many a sacrifice
That brings tears to the een.

You cheer the lives of lonely souls
In Winter's bitter days,
And help to get them bags o' coals
To make a warm blaze.

37

You oft refer in terms nice
To your Dear "Lady of the House",
Your page can often do the work
Of a whole sermon in the Kirk.

May Good Health be with you for aye
And may God bless you, Francis Gay.

GATHERING IN VERSE 1977

Strathardle Games once more were held
At "Kirkie Toon" in Bannerfield,
The Weather Clerk was very kind
With sunny blinks and drying wind,
The sward was firm, nae dubs or glaur,
Just right for Games and Tug-o-War.
All morning many were the folk
Who watched the judging of the stock,
Lams and gimmers, rams and ewes,
Fatted calves and suckler coos.

The Chieftain led the grand parade,
The Blair Pipe Band expertly played,
Many and varied were the races,
Tayside Police dogs showed their paces;
A very clever team o' dugs,
Retrieving, and arresting thugs,
They werenae frightened by a shot,
Right hearty warm applause they got.

Mrs. Handley did the honours,
Presenting trophies to the winners
And when this mammoth task was through,
She got bright flowers from Miss Andrew.
There was great fun with "Tilt the Bucket"
Though many entrants were "weel soakit":
A popular event, 'twas clear,
We'll need to have it every year.

38

Some think the goose is no' much use,
It makes the stomach queasy,
They'd rather have a nice fat duck
Although it's slightly greasy.

A haunch of venison is grand
Off big red deer or fallow,
And tender fare, more like the hare,
The dainty roe-deer fellow.

Pig-meat is good, a first-class food
Off bacon pig or porky,
At Christmas time I like a prime
Mid-sized, broad-breasted turkey.

The cushie-doo is tasty too,
The partridge plump and neat,
The sausage is a tasty dish,
The haggis fu' o' meat.

The fat sea-trout are a great treat
In their season of the year,
The poachers often capture them
Wi' flashlamps and a spear.

In Bible times the Israelites
Ate heaven-sent birds called quails,
And over on the Continent
I'm told the French eat snails!

In Belgium and the Netherlands
They often eat horse-flesh;
Around Loch Fyne herrings are fine
When eaten cured or fresh.

Scots students in the days of yore
Ate tatties and oatmeal;
Though feeding on this frugal fare
They usually did weel.

40

Jim Downie was a mighty hit
With humorous remarks and wit,
He also spoke in accents tender
Of the late Stewart Cameron and Frank Fender,
Two well-known and respected names,
Both staunch supporters of the Games.

To end the day a competition,
The "Musical Car" elimination,
After many a circular tour
'Twas won by Niven from Croftmuir,
As happily we homewards went
A piper played at the Monument,
Then later on, enjoyed by all
A dance was held in the village hall.

THANKS AT CHRISTMAS ON RECEIVING A GIFT OF GAME FROM MY LANDLORD

Dear Sir, Accept my Thanks sincere
For all your kindness, year by year,
Especially for your recent presents,
That welcome brace of lovely pheasants.

Hares from the field rich dark meat yield
And rabbit pie is sweet,
Brown trout I've tried, they're lovely fried,
And salmon is a treat.

Chickens are grand all the year round,
No matter what the weather,
Grouse from the hill make a good meal,
(Though with a taint of heather).

The big black game are much the same,
A wee bit "wersh" and tough,
But if well hung and fairly young
They can taste well enough.

39

The Eskimos in Arctic snows
Eat seal and walrus blubber,
I doubt they'll have to chew it well,
It must be tough as rubber!

The Russians rate caviare
A luxury and precious;
The Redskins on the prairie lands
Think pemmican delicious.

There's many a toothsome, tasty feast,
Rich, satisfying, pleasant,
But none can equal or surpass
A plump Pitcarmick pheasant.

JAMES DOWNIE AUCTIONEER PAR EXCELLENCE

I ken an able auctioneer,
Boss o' the market doon in Blair;
At sellin' poultry, pig or pownie
There's few can rival Jimmy Downie.

He cam' tae Blair some years ago
When sales were growin' rather low,
But wi' his skill, and verve and zest
Blair Sales are noo among the best.

Keen buyers come from all around,
They ken Blair stock is clean and sound,
They like the beasts bred in the Glen
And every year come back again.

His een are quick tae catch the bids,
The flickin' fingers, winks and nods,
He works hard for baith Laird and Crofter,
His jokes raise muckle mirth and laughter.

He's just as keen tae help the 'herds
As a' the high and mighty Lords;
Many a shepherd loon he's helpit
Since he cam' here tae mount the 'pulpit'.

41

At fairm sales he fairly shines,
The names o' a' the folk he kens,
Frae Inverness tae Gallowa'
He taks their bids and names them a'.

Queer things come oot o' barn-doors
But what they're for he seldom speirs;
This clever chield ye cannae puzzle
Be it thraw-crook or a ferret's muzzle!

He'll tell their function wi' a swagger,
A spade for peats, or a "bone-sagger",
A sye-dish or a reddin' cairn
Are quickly recognised by Jim.

The Mart men run tae dae his biddin',
Measurin' dreels or a dung midden;
They never try tae chow the fat,
Jim's the Boss and that is that!

The gunter's chain he well can use
And judge the wecht o' hay in soos;
Jimmy can sell wi' equal ease
Baith cross-bred coos and pedigrees.

Wi' varied stock he comes tae grups,
Suffolk, Leicester, Blackfaced tups,
B.F. wethers aff the hulls
And the expensive A.A. bulls.
At Christmas time he's sellin' turkeys,
In Springtime it's the grazin' stirkies.

He has a wondrous memory,
It really quite amazes me;
The price o' beasts he'll tell it clear
Though they were sold some time last year!!

Some lads changed owre tae Kirriemair,
They thocht they would dae better there,
But after trials fair and square
They're noo a' wearin' back tae Blair.

42

Ken Beaton kept it going well,
He gave us song and tale,
And if we happened to get dry,
John Gaston sold us ale.

Ian Irvine brought his organ up,
It was a precious cargo.
One of the finest tunes he played
Was Handel's famous "Largo".

A talented accompanist
Was there from Woodside town,
She is a daughter of Big Sam,
Her name's now Mrs. Brown.

We'd lots o' talent there to work on,
Includin' Donal' frae the Kirkton.
The night wore on richt smooth and gaily,
I ken o' nocht to beat a ceilidh.

BERT HOGG, ASHINTULLY,
ON HIS RETIRAL

I'll tell ye o' a freend o' mine
I sometimes meet at Dully,
His name's Bert Hogg, a fellow fine
Who works at Ashintully.

He cuts oot battens, posts and rails
And many a firewood log.
A pleasant chap, as hard as nails,
This forester Bert Hogg.

He'll build a fence, a dry-stane dyke
Or drain a rashie bog,
There's nane can equal or surpass
This handy man Bert Hogg.

44

There's no' a finer auctioneer
Frae Oban Toon tae Farfar,
I'm near the finish o' my tale,
Now try to guess the author!

May the Good Lord watch over you
And keep you well and hale,
And spare you many happy years
To reign at roup and Sale.

KIRKMICHAEL CEILIDH
28th JULY 1967.

We had a big nicht in oor toon,
I'll tell the tale wi' glee.
Last week we had a ceilidh,
It was run by S.N.P.

It was a very happy nicht,
I'll mind o't till I die.
The entertainers were first-class,
Ken Beaton, fear-an-tigh.

Sam Allan played the pipes wi' skill
And played the fiddle too.
Young Ian Duncan came as well,
A piper good and true.

Bob Wallace came up from Woodhill,
A violinist is he.
The audience came frae a' the airts,
Glenisla and Glenshee.

An Austrian girl the accordion played,
She took us a' by storm,
And when she stopped and bowed her head
The applause was long and warm.

We had a lot o' volunteers
To cheer the nicht along.
A teacher came from Kilry School
And gave a Gaelic song.

43

Sometimes he fares up after hares
Wi' gun and sporting dog,
A pleasant winter pastime this
Beloved by Bert Hogg.

He likes to shoot at targets
At Broughdarg in Glenshee,
A very skilful marksman too
Using a 303.

He came up here in 'thirty-nine,
A quiet, humble man,
A very careful driver too
O' his wee handy van.

He now has reached retiring age,
His work has run its course,
To mark this great occasion
His friends gave him a "horse".

He's still quite hale and hearty yet
Enjoying country life,
A very pleasant couple,
Bert and his couthie wife.

LETTER TO KENNETH MCKELLAR,
15th AUGUST 1969.
AN APPRECIATION.

Dear Sir, I'd like to say Bravo!
On your great recent T.V. Show.
It gave much pleasure, many smiles,
That journey through the Western Isles.
No need to go to foreign land
With scenes like these beside our hand.
Great heath-clad hills, clear sparkling rills,
A sight to cure most human ills.

45

You gave us history lessons too,
Most interesting as told by you.
Lessons from you would ne'er be dull
If you were teaching in the school.
Tales of clachan, castle, valley,
The story of Great Kishmal's Galley.
Of Vikings fierce, in long-boats raidin'
And plundering of gear and maiden.

You gave us many a charming song,
As manfully you strode along;
Fierce war-like song and tender lilt,
Resplendent in your tartan kilt.
You sang of lovely peat-fire flame
That puts a' modern fires to shame.
How grand you looked in heather snug
Carressin' yon nice collie dug.

Blair Castle was a special treat,
The Duke of Atholl's country seat.
The only man in a' the land
To own an Army and Pipe Band.
As sure as I set down these words
I never saw sae mony swords.
Of muskets too he has a share,
I saw some hunders hangin' there.
Both deadly arms in days of yore
But little use in modern war.
Suits of armour, chain-mail coats,
Sharp skean-dhus for cuttin' throats,
Antlers off the red deer fellies,
Lang claymores for slashin' bellies!

46

Then later on a cheery turn
By that great pair Eric and Ern,
They had a lot of comic acts
And I enjoyed the great climax
When "Angela" came on the scene
And brightened up the T.V. screen.
Though usually sedate and grave
A fascinating show she gave
With high kicks, wiggles, prancin', skippin',
An agile lass is Angie Rippon.
In flowing robe as white as snow
She absolutely stole the show,
A great display indeed, by Fegs!
And what a shapely pair of legs.
A memorable, great display,
A perfect end to a Perfect Day.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO THE QUEEN MOTHER
4th AUGUST 1975.

Tonight again I've ta'en my pen
In verse to write and say
Best Wishes to Your Majesty
Upon this Natal Day.

The swiftly turning wheels of Time
Have made their annual circle,
Another year has come and gone
But still you brightly sparkle.

You play your part with a stout heart
And earnest dedication;
Your courage and activity
Inspires the British Nation.

I hope your useful, glorious life
A long time still shall run,
Maintaining all your energy
And lively sense of fun.

48

How out-of-place and very strange
To see a modern rocket range
Where we would rather hear and view
The plaintive-calling grey curlew.
I liked to see the Naples fountains
But no' their hot volcanic mountains.
The aerial rail I viewed in terror,
I'd rather bide on "firma terra"
The astronauts fly to the Moon
And other regions stellar,
Of far more interest to me
The Songs of Ken McKellar.
I'm glad you're Scottish thro' and thro',
Dear Ken, I lift my hat to you.

TELEVISION AT CHRISTMAS 1976.

We watched a graceful programme nice,
The sparkling "Holiday on Ice".
A circus next, but in between
The Annual Broadcast by The Queen.
A fervent plea to all the Nation
For total reconciliation.

The circus was a non-stop show
With lots of action, plenty go.
Horses and elephants were there,
Trapezists flyin' thro' the air.
Back-somersaulting chimpanzees,
Gymnasts of great expertise.
In all my life I ne'er did witness
Such feats of balance, strength and fitness.
Clowns and augustes acted daft
And how the happy children laughed!

47

You draw great multitudes to view
At functions and parades,
With regal style and sparkling smile,
Clad in soft pastel shades.

Head of our Royal Family,
A Scot both wise and canny,
Most popular with one and all,
A Darling Mum and Granny.

You never, never spare yourself
From all exacting duty,
Both great and small are held in thrall
By your entrancing beauty.

You've reached a part far ben our hearts
And there you'll always dwell,
A Mistress of the Royal Arts
The Queen we love so well.

I'll terminate my little rhyme
With Compliments sincere,
Best Wishes on your Birthday
To our Queen Mother Dear.

FROM GLASGOW TO THE GLEN.
INVITATION AND DIRECTIONS TO A FRIEND.

If you are ever dull or bored
Just take a jaunt up here,
I'll scratch my head and chew my pen
And write directions clear.

First stage of course you'll come to Perth,
A City fine and fair,
Here cross the Tay, then left and North
It's sixteen miles to Blair.

Take plenty care and drive your car
As well as you are able,
And in a mile or two you'll see
The Perth Hunt Racing Stable.

49

The road's quite guid, you'll come great speed,
I dae't inside the oor,
And on the wye you'll pass close by
The Beech Hedge at Meikleour.

Straight into Blair, and near the Square
You'll see the Queen's Hotel,
I've often been to Ceilidhs there
And aye enjoyed mysel'!

Turn to the right down Allan Street,
It's short and no' ower wide,
Then at the bottom turn left
And on your right-hand side
You'll see a famous beauty spot
Blairgowrie's joy and pride.

"Wellmeadow" is it's lovely name,
It's really most pictorial,
With flower beds bright, and grass cut right
And stately War Memorial.

There's seats around this bonnie ground
So tidy, bright and gay,
Where folk can sit and rest their shanks
And pass the time o'day.

You leave this lovely spot behind,
So clean and neat and trig,
And at the bottom corner
It's left turn across the Brig.

Across the Brig and up "Boat Brae"
It isnae very far,
You'll see a muckle sign-post
Wi' the mileage to Braemar (33).

Turn left again and up the Glen
Leaving the town behind,
You'll soon arrive at Craighall Bridge,
A lovely spot, you'll find.

50

Now make your way through Craighall Woods,
A twisty road and steep,
A little word of warning here,
Beware of straying sheep!

The tree-clad banks beside the road
Are full of wild flowers nice,
I often think when passing by,
"A Botanist's Paradise".

Across a chasm among the trees
The Craighall Mansion hides,
A house built on a precipice,
It's here Clerk-Ratray bides.

Emerging from the Craighall Woods
You're in Gleneloch Valley,
And three miles further on you come
To bonnie Brig o' Cally.

This road is very picturesque,
A pleasant sight to view,
Wi' well spaced trees on either side
Just like an avenue.

The scenery round Cally Brig
Superb, a perfect treat,
A verdant valley on the right
Where Shee and Ardlie meet.

Cross Cally Brig, sharp left again
And up another brae,
You now are into Ardlie Glen,
I hope it's a nice day!

A bonnie Strath it is indeed
With woods and pastures fine
And six miles on you come upon
This humble "Hame o' Mine".

51

To find a warmer welcome
You would have some far to look,
Our house is snug and cosy,
And my wife's the World's Best Cook!

BONNIE STRATHARDLE
9th JUNE 1968

At evening when the day's work done
I try some rhymin' just for fun,
O' verses I have got a store
I hope they're no' too great a bore.
I'll tell ye o' this Bonnie Glen,
(I wish I had more fluent pen),
I'll write about the birds and bees
The beasties, flowers and bonnie trees.
I'll set my thoughts doon as they come
O' this braw Glen, my own "Sweet Home".
I hope you're patient men and women,
Have you got time to read what's comin'?

Strathardle's fair wi' clear fresh air,
Strathardle's wondrous bonnie,
I've lived up here for forty year
I wouldnae change for ony.
The kindly Spring has come again
Wi' promise of new life,
Once more behind us we have left
Cauld Winter's storm and strife.
The frosty gales have a' died doon
The song-birds sing a cheery tune,
The calves are friskin' roond their dams
The yowes are nursin' snow-white lambs.
A lovely sward of grass and clover
Is spreading pasture fields all over.
There's happiness in farmers' hearts
Noo Summer's warmin' up these parts.

Among the birks the roe deer browse,
The hares are dancin' on the knowes,
The wheeplin whaup and golden plover

52

Send plaintive music o'er the heather.
The red grouse cry "Go Back! Go Back!",
In Winter they live in a pack.
At evening hedgehogs roam the field,
They've wintered in a cosy bield.
Then there's the squirrels and the rabbits,
I won't comment upon their habits!
The badger and the wily fox
Spend daylight sleeping 'mongst the rocks.
At night they come down from their den
And try to steal a duck or hen.

The Ardlie flows through soople saughs
By bonny, level verdant haughs,
Sandpipers "wheep" beside the river,
(But corn-crakes have gone for ever).
Wild geese have honked off to the North,
The angler to catch trout goes forth.
The swallows twitter on the roofs,
We hear the trekking ponies' hoofs.
The skylarks sing a roundelay,
Young pairtricks cheep among the hay,
Cock pheasants strut in plumage gay,
Young peesies run upon the clay.
There's curlews whistlin' in the cluds,
There's couples coortin' in the wuds.
The countryside is very fair,
We snuff the sweet and caller air,
The oats are growin' strong and green,
The broom is bonnie to be seen,
It is a perfect golden glow,
I never saw a better show.
The blackbird, lintie, yellow yite,
Pour forth their song from morn till night.
The chaffinch has a lovely trill,
The redshank's call is sharp and shrill,
The oyster-catcher says "tee Leet",
The willow-warbler's song is sweet.
To me the birds are very dear
Especially at this time o' year,
I'm aye sae glad to hear and see them
I whiles join in and whistle wi' them!

53

I'll now conclude my wee bit story
About this Glen in Summer glory.
And if you think that lies I tell
Come here and see it for yoursel'!

SANDY ROBERTSON
(EQUINE ENTHUSIAST)

I ken a chap ca'ed Robertson
Wha bides at Carsie Mains,
A Clydesdale horse enthusiast,
And many a prize he gains.

No longer workin' on the fairms
He's a lorry driver noo,
But many a day he earned his pay
By followin' the ploo.

He gangs tae Plooin' Matches
All up and doon the land;
A handsome weel-kent figure,
Wi' horse and harness grand.

Braw sicht tae see when plooin' lea,
His horses' coats aye bloomin',
An expert wi' the brush and comb
He's often first for groomin'.

He always plooos a first-class plot,
His work is firm and thorough,
May he be spared for many years
To turn a stylish furrow.

TO A MOOSE
(MODERN VERSION!)

Ye sleekit, greedy, thievin' moosie,
Ye've gotten intae my wee hoosie,
Hopin' for tit-bits sweet and juicy,
At dead o' night,
No just yoursel, but Mrs. Moosie
Ye did invite!

54

BORELAND BALL
A REAL SCOTCH NICHT,
SATURDAY 21st AUGUST 1971

I'll tell ye o' a happy nicht
When some freends met together
To shake a leg and sing a song
And ha'e a pleasant blether.

The nicht was fair, the wind was still,
The Autumn air was warm,
The muster-place the granary
At Alexander's farm.

Balloons festooned the wooden beams
And all was bright and gay;
Wi' cosy seats along the wa's,
Rugs spread on bales o' strae.

The company was nicely mixed,
Gents, Ladies, Girls and Boys,
The fun was fast and furious
A merry, pleasant noise.

Green bulrushes adorned the scene,
They came from sea-maw waters,
And grand folk-songs were sung for us
By "Hillfoot's" lovely daughters.

The music-makers on the job
Soon warmed up to their work,
Playing for Scottische and Waltz and Reel
And Grand Old Duke o' York.

Uncle Fraser charmed our ears
Wi' tunes upon his fiddle;
He whistled lively Scottish airs
And gave a wee bit "diddle".

Great talent there was everywhere,
Variety was wide;
A young lad wi' a trumpet
Played sweetly "Side by Side".

56

Ye sampled spuds beneath the sink,
And spread aroond a nesty stink,
'Twas waur than ony ragged tink
That tramps the road,
But you're approachin' Death's dread brink,
Ye are by G ...

Ye got among the cookin' gibbles,
And left your pellets and wee dribbles,
Ye even had wee trial nibbles
At papers there;
Ye gave my wife her share o' troubles
I do declare!

Ye've had a mischievous career,
Wi' very little sign o' fear,
To end your days I'll no' be sweer
And nothing loth;
And if your missus should appear
I'll nab ye both!

Right carefully I planned this killin',
I got a trap frae Mrs. Milne,
A trap that there was lots o' skill in,
It sets itsel!
Wi' toasted cheese a temptin' fillin'
I placed it well.

This bait nae moosie can resist,
Successfully it stood the test,
My victim noo and a' the rest
Have lost their lives;
The first ane was a bigamist,
He had twa wives!!

Those raiding rodents were right evil,
They chewed a wooden spoon and theevil,
A bunch o' richt destructive deevils
They were indeed,
Wi' their dead bodies I did revel
The cat tae feed!

55

The hospitality was great
Wi' drams o' beer and spirit,
The walls were covered all around
Wi' works o' artistic merit.

A haggis huge was carried in
Chief o' the Puddin' Race,
The guests a' stood up with respect
As Donal gave the Address.

A weel matched pair gave a display,
The fun it fairly bolstered,
A bowler-hatted, whiskered gent
And his "wife", richt weel upholstered!

Donal helped along the fun
And kept us a' in order,
The guests were there frae a' the airts
Some from across the Border.

A lovely spree, a gorgeous tea,
The eats a perfect treat,
Home-made foods of every kind,
Lovely, tasty, sweet.

Hands clasped we joined in "Auld Lang Syne"
Then home-ward made our way,
I'll mind about that "Boreland Ball"
Until my dying day.

DUNDEE REP. AT KIRKMICHAEL

At E-N-O-R-M-O-U-S EXPENSE!! last Wednesday
From Dundee City by the Tay
Two gifted couples came along
To entertain with Sketch and Song.

A smart young chap the programme chaired
With button-hole and well-trimmed beard,
He kept the party going well
With joke, and jest, and quip and tale.

57

A gifted, talented quartette,
A finer bunch I never met;
As through the varied acts they romped
They did not need a single prompt.

The Show was absolutely great,
They dealt with the year "twenty-eight".
And gave a splendid treat to all,
'Twas like "The Old Tyme Music Hall".

The sketch about the new H.P.
Caused quite a lot of mirth and glee,
Each incident expertly done,
The audience joined in with the fun.

Miss Carol-Ann the piano played,
In gorgeous dress she was arrayed,
When I beheld her charm and glamour
My he'rt was thumpin' like a hammer!!

The Chairman gave us lots o' lauchs
With words that rivalled Leonard Sachs;
Preposterous alliteration
Gave colour to this great occasion.

Stage management was smart and slick,
The change of costume really quick,
Word perfect too in every number
A show that we will long remember.

Chaplin was there, that droll wee body
And also Dr. Walford Bodie,
And just to help the show along
We heard how Great Al Jolson sang.

We had much fond anticipation
And now twas keen realisation;
A source of pleasure and much glee
This "Other Company" from Dundee.

58

The entertainment was first class,
The "Star" guest was a lovely lass,
With rosy cheeks and golden tress,
She charmed us all at Cortachy.

With tuneful tongue and sparkling smile,
Our worldly cares she did beguile,
The best Scots singer by a mile
That ever sang at Cortachy.

In tasteful, stylish garments dressed,
She gave us of her very best,
Our eyes and ears were richly blest
That glorious night at Cortachy.

The audience clapped and cried for more,
They shouted out "Encore! Encore!",
I never saw such zeal before
As I saw then at Cortachy.

The room was warm, the chairs were snug,
We'd pleasant drinks in glass and jug,
I made friends wi' a big black dug,
The household pet at Cortachy.

He laid his head upon my knee
And wagged his tail right merrilee,
The both of us were thrilled to see
This lovely lass at Cortachy.

Gamekeepers ceased to hunt the fox,
Hill shepherds left their black-faced flocks,
To see this lass wi' golden locks
And hear her sing at Cortachy.

Her smile was bright, her eyes they shone,
Her voice was sweet, in lovely tone,
Her songs would melt a heart of stone
Or granite rocks at Cortachy.

60

The end was reached, the programme o'er,
We took our chairs and went next door
Where we assembled round each table
To eat as much as we were able.
Cakes and biscuits dear to me
And a grand cheering cup o' tea.

I found myself next Carol-Ann,
To chat her up was now my plan,
It was indeed a pleasant chat,
We talked of this, and also that!

The number of their shows was Legion
All over this great Tayside Region.
Sometimes they even crossed to Fife,
A very happy, entertaining life.

Sweet Sarah Bennett also caught my eye,
She said she loved my bonnie tartan tie!
That happy day was a delightful thriller
Under the able management of Danny Hillier,
They brought great joy to Ardlie Glen,
We hope they'll soon come back again.

A HAPPY NICHT AT CORTACHY

One evening in the month o' June
We sallied forth in real good tune
To a braw Hotel, near Kirrie Toon,
The "Jubilee" at Cortachy.

Dykehead Hotel goes like a fair
When Duguid brings great singers there,
The people come from everywhere
And congregate at Cortachy.

Our waitress was a dark-haired quine,
The food was good, the wine divine,
A splendid place to dance and dine
The "Jubilee" at Cortachy.

59

The lights were soft, the music sweet,
She looked superb from head to feet,
It was a most delightful treat,
For everyone at Cortachy.

A' sorts o' folk were gathered there,
Townsmen, farmer, auctioneer,
They a' joined in to clap and cheer
When this "Star" sang at Cortachy.

A multitude o' wives and men
From Dundee, Forfar, Ferryden,
I'm sure they'll a' come back again
Next time she sings at Cortachy.

When she comes back our hearts to cheer,
Depend upon it we'll be there,
It's aye the highlight o' the year
When this "Star" sings at Cortachy.

BURNS UP TO DATE

I wonder what Rab Burns would say
If he could see our land today?
One thing would grieve him amongst ither,
That men still dinnae live like brithers.
Our country's leaders split in factions,
Strikes, go slow, industrial actions.
High speed upon the road is banned,
We're breathalysed if we get "canned".
A tax on this, a tax on that,
A queer new-fangled tax ca'ed VAT.
For O.A.P.s the times are cruel,
Scarce o' grub and heating fuel.
In the forthcoming wintry weather
A wheen will perish a'thegither
Then there's this stupid Common Market,
To dafter schemes I never harkit.
And that white elephant Concorde,
A plane nae country can afford.
O'er a' the World the threat o' wars

61

And space ships fleein' thro' the stars,
 Much dissipation, feud and faction,
 Graft, bribery, crime and corruption.
 Too many folk inclined to shirk
 From that four letter word ca'ed "WORK".
 I wonder sometimes what he'd say
 About the morals of today?
 Our doctors wi' abortions thrang,
 Divorces going for a sang.
 Religious leaders in confliction,
 Permissive conduct, drug addiction,
 There's peels for pain, and peels for tension,
 And other peels I daurna mention.
 Big families in too few rooms,
 Lung cancer caused by diesel fumes,
 We've income tax and kindred burdens,
 We're sair harassed by traffic wardens.
 On every hand there's gloom and dule,
 And a' oor jyles and Borstals full.
 A dreadful shock he'd surely have
 To see how many misbehave;
 Wild vandals in the toons abound,
 They cawp tombstones on sacred ground,
 They do much damage without cause,
 And write gang slogans on the wa's.
 There's scant respect shown for auld age
 And smokin' "pot" is a' the rage.
 Mean burglaries are far too common,
 And murders o' men, bairns and women,
 A vast increase in this foul crime,
 Nae hangin' noo, they just dae time,
 In fifteen years they're oot again,
 A menace to their fellow men.
 He'd tell us how to make this stop,
 Bring back the dreaded hangman's rope.
 He'd shake his head, and blush wi' shame,
 And then go back the way he came,
 There's just one thing might make him smile,
 This country's great reserves o' "ILE".

62

Teresa Gibbons came to sing
 Lookin' awfu' bonnie,
 And Anne Moore cam' riding on "Psalm"
 Her great show-jumping pony.

The "Maestro" Jimmy Shand came up
 From Braidleys o'er in Fife,
 Wee Harold Wilson made it too,
 Wi' his poetic wife.

Harold sat and smoked his pipe
 In 'baccy reek enveloped,
 And Racquel Welch was also there,
 She's very well developed!

Edward Heath wi' flashing teeth
 Gave everyone a smile,
 And Winnie Ewing gave a talk
 On Scotland's wealth o' Ile.

Big Donal' Stewart came from the Isles,
 Our S.N.P. M.P.
 And Harvey Smith was also there
 With controversial V.

Fred Stewart came from Spittalfield
 To cheer the fun along.
 He sang especially for me
 The lovely "Annie's Song".

Moira Myles danced daintily,
 A soople lass and bonnie;
 She did The Fling, Shean Trews and Jig,
 And also Barracks Johnnie.

Her charming mother sang for us,
 Her voice was sweet and true,
 She sang one of my favourite songs,
 "The Waters of Kylesku".

64

A CEILIDH OF MY DREAMS

One night I had a vivid dream,
 I fear it won't come true;
 It made me happy all the same,
 I'll tell the tale to you.

I dreamt I won the Fitba' Pools,
 My pleasure knew no bounds
 When I went to receive the cheque
 Five Hunder Thousand Pounds!

A tidy sum you will agree,
 It was a great occasion,
 I thought it would be very nice
 To have a celebration.

Jimmy Ritchie came to play
 (He got a special biddin').
 He very nearly stopped the show
 Wi' "The Hen's Mairch o'er the Midden".

Eileen McIntosh was there
 Wi' a braw new cordovox,
 Wi' hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels
 She fairly gave it "sox".

Ian Cruickshank entertained,
 A tall young man frae Kirrie,
 Although he kept a solemn face
 His tunes were bright and merry.

Fanny Craddock took the flair
 And demonstrated salads,
 And Geordie Hepburn cam' frae Blair
 And sang some Bothy Ballads.

Sandy Wilkie played his "box",
 His music pleased me rarely,
 And skilfully accompanying him
 His girl-friend Pat from Airlie.

63

Vanessa Redgrave modelled gowns
 In many a graceful pose,
 And Fiona Richmond thrilled the men
 By wearing scanty clothes.

Diana Dors arrived half-clad,
 She only had a slip on,
 And yon braw lass who reads "The News"
 The fabulous Miss Rippon.

Strong man Andy Robins came
 From his pub at Sheriffmair,
 He had a thrilling wrestling bout
 Wi' "Hercules the Bear".

John Laurie told us fairy tales
 About the Isle of Barra;
 And Dunc McRae came back to life
 And sang "The Wee Cock Sparra".

George Formby too rose from the dead
 To play his ukelele,
 And a gorgeous, go-go dancing girl
 Displayed her naked midriff.

Elizabeth Taylor cried in too,
 World famous for her looks
 And 'Enery took his jacket off
 To show some great left hooks.

Shari Lewis did her act,
 She wore long false eye-lashes
 And Jimmy Edwards told blue jokes
 While twirling his moustaches.

We got some lively jigs and reels
 From Lindsay Ross o' Fricockheim,
 And grand Welsh songs were sweetly sung
 By ex-goon Harry Secombe.

65

Straight from Z Cars Sergeant Lynch
That pawky Irish rogue,
He gave some recitations
In his charming Irish brogue.

Then Bonnie Moira rose to sing
With smile and sparkling eye,
She sang some great songs from the Shows
And "Comin' thro' the Rye".

One of the scintillating stars
In Scotland's constellation,
May she be spared for many years
To entertain the Nation.

Sid James looked smug quaffin' a jug,
His face a' blotched and boozie,
And Jock McFarlane came by gig
Frae "The Sproats o' Burnieboozie".

Frank Sinatra crooned to us,
He never fails to please
And Mike Bentine put on a show
Wi' his performing fleas!

Young Derek Fowlde attended too
With "Basil Brush" the fox,
And Helen Jane McArthur sang,
A lass wi' golden locks.

More dear to me than barley-bree
Or wine in silver tassie,
The "Smile and Song" and tuneful tongue
Of this McArthur lassie.

Her charming songs are pure and clean
From smut they're always free,
The kind of songs that warm the hearts
Of Puritans like me!

66

Big Connolly played lots o' pranks
And Bob Hope gave the votes o' thanks.
Derek Nimmo, dressed as priest,
Asked a blessing on the feast.
This feast was set in a marquee
To nourish everyone,
I had a lovely gammon steak
Just as I like it done.

After the meal there was a Dance
To carry on the fun;
I'd Jim McLeod and his bright crowd
To keep us on the run.

No charge was made as folk came in
To join in this hilarity,
But I'd facilities laid on
To help deserving charity.

Right handsomely they did respond
With coin and rustling note,
I was so overwhelmed with joy
A lump came in my throat.
And it got bigger, and BIGGER and BIGGER
Till it woke me up!!

So now my rhyming story's done,
I know it's foolish but it's FUN.

PRESENTATION TO MRS. C. LAIRD
ON HER RETIRAL FROM KILRY SCHOOL 27.9.79

Dear Friends we're gathered here tonight
To pay tributes to one
Who by her sterling qualities
The hearts of all has won.

Since coming as Head Teacher here
Some sixteen years have gane;
Before that she was at Straloch
In Bonnie Ardle Glen.

68

Cliff Richard also came to sing,
Well loved by many nations;
His offering was very apt -
The song "Congratulations".

The veteran "Gracie" came by plane
From Capri's sunny isle,
She captivated every ane
With song and sparkling smile.

Songs from "The Sound of Music",
An ever welcome choice,
Were sung by Julie Andrews
In her delightful voice.

Bright young "Dana" graced the show
And merrily did sing,
We got her Eurovision song
"All Kinds of Everything".

Andy Stewart was there of course
Wi' song and comic story,
He sang "The Scottish Soldier" first
And then "The Tunes of Glory".

Leonard Sachs raised lots o' lauchs
Wi' his lang nebbit words,
While a wizard-cum-magician
Was swallowing sharpened swords!

Refreshing drinks available
If any one felt droothie,
And Larry Adler entertained
Wi' music on his "moothie".

Dave Allen cracked some lurid jokes
On nuns and Catholic priests,
Then Johnny Morris came along
To chat about his beasts.

67

One night in The Club at Enochdhu
A great "quiz" game was run;
With her superb intelligence
She answered every one.

When news leaked out around Straloch
That her post she was forsakin',
Many a sad, saut tear was shed
And many hearts were breakin'.

Away she went though all had hoped
That there she would remain,
But it's never lost what friends receive,
Our loss was Kilry's gain.

By pupils and by parents
She is held in high esteem;
With her assistant Mrs. Hoy
They make a splendid team.

She never punished any bairn
Unless she had good cause,
Though a disciplinarian
She seldom used the "tawse".

The scholars in her able hands
Received a sound foundation,
And when transferred to Kirriemuir
Earned warmest approbation.

For musical instruction
A wondrous gift she had,
Her tuneful scholars scooped the pool
At last year's Gaelic Mod.

At local social functions
She helped the night along
With charming style and sparkling smile
And Hebridean song.

69

A nicer, kinder hostess
No-one could come upon,
Whenever you went in the door
She put the kettle on!

Her lengthy spell of duties o'er
She's laying down her load,
And going to live at "Monawee"
Down in St. Ninian's Road.

A word or two about the girls
To leave them oot I cannae,
Treena and Jan are married noo
And Mrs. Laird's a granny!

Now finally to end my rhyme
I've just one wish to say,
Long Life, Good Health and Happiness
For Mrs. Laird, M.A.

AULD SCOTS WORDS

I've been researchin' auld Scots words
And gie them noo wi' kind regards.
"Howk" was the auld Scots word for dig,
And "Grumphy" was their name for pig.
"Cranreuch" was the cauld hoar frost
And Whooping Cough was aye "Kink Hoast",
"Founarts" was the name for weasles,
"Mirrles" was the word for measles.
A day dream was described as "dwan",
A singe was often called a "scaum".
They always called your haunches "hurdies"
And "gorblins" were young fledgling birdies.
"Kep" was the word they used for catch
And "Thike" was how they named the thatch.
A "steekit nieve" was a clenched fist
And "thraw" was the auld word for twist.
A farm engagement was a "fee",
The word they used for taste was "prie".
They used to call a cup a "tassie",

70

A pretty girl a "bonnie lassie".
A travelling pedlar was a "cadger",
The exciseman got the title "gauger".
"Pints" were for lacin' up your "buits",
They often called your ankles "queets".
They called an awful mess a "soss",
If things were empty they were "boss".
Infusin' tea was aye called "maskin'",
And putting on your clothes was "buskin".
A water-demon was a "kelpie",
A youthful damsel was a "gilpy".
The Doric name for dog was "tyke",
They often called a wasp's nest "byke".
The usual name for ask was "spier",
Learning was often known as "lear".
When folk were tired they felt "forjaskit",
A "neep scull" was a turnip basket.
The name for hollow was a "howe",
Likewise a hillock was a "knowe".
The auld Scots word for tough was "teuch"
And if you laughed they said ye "leuch".
A heap of stones of course was "cairn",
Also an infant was a "bairn".
Bathing in a loch was "dookin'".
And "keekin'" was the word for "lookin'".
They called a spinning-top a "peerie",
"Unchancy" was the word for eerie.
A rendezvous was aye a "howff",
The word for melancholy, "dowf".
The teacher's strap was named "the tawse",
"Chafths" was the Doric word for jaws.
They'd say a buxom lass was "gaucy",
And often called the causeway "causey".
Anything beautiful was "braw",
To somersault was "turn catmaw".
They named the golden eagles "ernes",
The twinkling stars above were "sternes".
Young hens were pullets, sometimes "erricks",
Larch trees were often known as "lerricks".
The carrion crow was called a "hoodie".
The hangman's noose was named the "woodie".
A barren yowe was aye a "yeld ane",
The firewood heap was called the "elden".

71

The common word for itch was "yeuk",
Also a sickle was a "heuk".
They often called the sky the "lift",
To swell up was to "hove" or "heft".
Sermons dull were sermons "dreich",
The Scottish word for high was "heich".
A pretty child was "bonnie bairn",
And farmyard manure was "shairn".
Instead o' leaps they aye said "lowps",
Posteriors were known as "dowps".
They often called the birch trees "birks",
Last year's crop o' calves were "stirks".
Your countenance was called your "phiz",
Instead of Us they aye said "Hiz".
Last evening was aye called "yestreen",
Instead of eyes they aye said "een".
In Aberdeenshire string was "tow",
The hair upon your head was "pow".
A bee-hive made of straw was "ruskie",
A practical joke or prank was "plisky".
I could go on for evermore
But fear that it would be a bore,
In any case my space is done,
So it's Ta! ta! to everyone.

72