

**ST. ANDREWS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield, S3 7RQ**

# **MESSENGER**

Price £1.25

May 2020



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## **MORE REFLECTIONS ON COPING WITH THE PANDEMIC**

In early March a medical school friend of Sheila's, with epidemiological experience, commented that we should stock up as the pandemic was coming. After initial scepticism we went off and did a big shop and bought ingredients for an expanded menu, exploring new culinary possibilities. We decided that social isolation was appropriate for an older couple, classified as at risk. We set about preparing food for the freezer until it was full.

Within a day or two calls began, cancelling church facility bookings, and soon, almost all had been postponed indefinitely. The Management Team meeting was cancelled, so a bulletin was prepared instead and it was apparent that all face to face meetings would be stopped. Planned family visits were also abandoned and the WhatsApp went into overdrive. The derided social media became important and we were inducted into the advantages of FaceTime. I said to Sheila that I felt that I had at last retired. What to do with the time, as it stretched out in front of us?

Sheila had been given a 1000 piece jigsaw of butterflies by Bill Smyllie; she set to, but soon realised that even forming the edges of this one was difficult for an experienced jigsaw buff. When I retired Sheila had bought an organ trying to encourage me to start playing an instrument again and although I had started, continuing professional activities soon overtook me. It now seemed an attractive proposal and I looked out a 1913 manual that I think Douglas had given me years ago. I decided to start at the beginning, which meant starting with the foot pedals. If I sit comfortably on the stool, it is too far back and I can't reach the extremes of the scale; if I sit too far forward I slip off the stool when I try to reach the top or bottom pedals. Having taken three weeks to work through the first 43 exercises, I

find that moving one foot behind the other provides a new way of keeping fit. Of course I am resurrecting my keyboard skills, but the fingering encourages distortions never countenanced for the piano. As for trying to use the feet **and** the hands, that fills me with apprehension.

Lockdown continues, and although it can be managed if one has a garden and the weather is reasonable, one's heart goes out to those cooped up in a small apartment. Sheila is working at the gardening, as Spring bursts forth. Keep fit exercises have assumed importance, but the pattern of the days and Sunday worship has receded. We had a virtual 13th birthday party for a granddaughter, Mia. Zoom was installed and venues around the country logged on and the extended family was "together", the screen split into four, each group being shown. We had a quiz, the birthday cake's candles were lit and the repartee flourished. Telephone calls will never substitute in future.

The evening government briefing and the 6pm News have become essential viewing, but we have not been seduced by the appeal of boxed sets. I am surprised by criticisms of the handling of the pandemic response. So many are speaking of preparedness, yet the last pandemic was more than 100 years ago. The situation has been complicated by the suppression of information about the epidemic from China, although the genetic sequence of the virus was published from there. That enabled a series of genetic fragments to be tailored for allow identification of the virus in sufferers, but only using research lab skills and equipment, not suddenly to test the millions of people with acute symptoms. Similarly, to test whether one has had the infection, antibodies need to be measured. They take weeks to develop in significant amounts, important for the detection of recent infection in patients and ultimately for the identification of viral fragment/s that can develop good immune responses and be the basis of a vaccine. Although the stage will be reached when a significant proportion of younger people have been infected and recovered, i.e. when herd immunity is achieved, the vulnerable groups will remain vulnerable and will only be safe when given the vaccine. That suggests that we will be socially isolating for many months yet.

Residents from further along our street have put leaflets through the door offering help for shopping and other activities and new friendships are developing. Without access to an ATM, cash has all gone, so how to pay people for goods purchased? Finally, we have had to come to terms with internet banking and the confusion of

endless passwords to gain access to services required. We are marching into the digital age. Other friends have telephoned offering help. I even had an e-mail from Egypt offering support. We have been telephoning people living alone and have made much more frequent contact with friends living abroad, where the problems are similar; using a Planex number (0844 605 7777 from a landline and then, when they answer, put in the full number) it costs 1p a minute, so the duration of the call becomes irrelevant.

Although at our age job prospects are not an issue, they are for a great many. Further, with the value of digital technology becoming daily more evident, the nature of work will change. Computer skills will become crucial and communication techniques will likely change the pattern of travel. Today a meeting of the Broomhall Centre Management Committee will take place using Zoom. I can see the nature of meetings changing; broadband speeds need to increase, 5G will be essential, connectivity of multiple devices will not be the prerogative of the young. Welcome to the new world, changing faster than we could ever have predicted or planned. Out of so much danger and stress, some good will come.

Douglas Jones has added some lovely music in video clips to our website, co-ordinated with texts for a service. I have an opportunity to play those neglected CDs while cooking. I read that more cultural activities will be accessible online, virtual museum visits, musicians becoming more creative. Perhaps the value of friendships and contact will become even more appreciated, but the processes will be different. There was a rich diversity of services that Elizabeth offered for Sunday. We are only limited by our imagination. May everyone stay safe and seek some solace at this time; in the future we should cherish many of the things we learn from this experience.

*Ian Cooke*

With being on maternity leave following the birth of Anna, enforced closure of Benjamin's nursery meant I could cover our childcare. I was a little daunted at having two children at home full time. Thankfully Benjamin is a very proud big brother and keen to help with Anna (now 3 months) who likes to return his attentions with full face smiles.

Being at home with both children feels like a safe little bubble. Thankfully, Benjamin is good at playing independently, while I tend to Anna. He has always loved vehicles and so his trains & wooden track or match box cars & a road, often cover our sitting room floor, and Anna is keen to watch (for now) as shown in the picture.

Unfortunately Steve can't work from home, but his going into work (in a chemical contract research company in Chapel-en-le-Frith) provides structure to our day. Our midday walk doubles up as a scootering opportunity for Benjamin, and helps start a nap for Anna, so Benjamin & I can play, read or do an activity on our return home.

With Benjamin (hopefully) starting school in September, I know that this time at home is a blessing, even though the cause is a difficult one. I am often amazed by his abilities, and am hopeful that over this weird time (however long it may be) we are forming family memories that we will remember forever and establishing a strong relationship between Benjamin and Anna.



*Alison Moore*

## **LECTIONARY READINGS for May 2020**

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 26 April         | Psalm <b>116</b> : 1-4, 12-19; Acts <b>2</b> : 14a, 36-41;<br>1 Peter <b>1</b> : 17-23; Luke <b>24</b> : 13-35              |
| 3 May            | Psalm <b>23</b> ; Acts <b>2</b> : 42-47; 1 Peter <b>2</b> : 19-25;<br>John <b>10</b> : 1-10                                 |
| 10 May           | Psalm <b>31</b> : 1-5, 15-16; Acts <b>7</b> : 55-60;<br>1 Peter <b>2</b> : 2-10; John <b>14</b> : 1-14                      |
| 17 May           | Psalm <b>66</b> : 8-20; Acts <b>17</b> : 22-31;<br>1 Peter <b>3</b> : 13-22; John <b>14</b> : 15-21                         |
| 24 May           | Psalm <b>68</b> : 1-10, 32-35; Acts <b>1</b> :6-14;<br>1 Peter <b>4</b> : 12-14, and <b>5</b> : 6-11; John <b>17</b> : 1-11 |
| 31 May           | Numbers <b>11</b> : 24-30; Psalm <b>104</b> : 24-34, 35b;   |
| <i>Pentecost</i> | 1 Corinthians <b>12</b> : 3b-13 <b>or</b> Acts <b>2</b> : 1-21; John <b>20</b> : 19-23                                      |
| 7 June           | Genesis <b>1</b> :1 to <b>2</b> : 4a; Psalm <b>8</b> ;  |
| <i>Trinity</i>   | 2 Corinthians <b>13</b> : 11-13; Matthew <b>28</b> : 16-20  |

## **A PRAYER FOR THESE TIMES** from the URC Moderators:

‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’ (Psalm 46:1)

As so much is re-shaped by Coronavirus Covid-19, let us pray with -  
people left unwell, beckoned by death or bereaved;  
people providing professional health care and advice, looking after  
loved ones at home or working to create treatments and cures;  
people shaping the response of nations and neighbourhoods,  
of commerce and industry,  
of service and voluntary organisations  
and of communities of faith;  
people who are anxious or afraid, alone or isolated.

Living, loving God,  
we praise you,  
and through times of peril we lean into you,  
for in Jesus Christ  
you have trodden paths as difficult as ours,  
revealing there a love that nothing defeats,  
a love that bears us through.

Even as we strive to behave responsibly,  
and to care reliably,  
so we feel after you  
that in these uncertain times we might trust you are with us,  
our refuge and strength,  
and our faith, hope and love might be renewed,  
through Jesus Christ, AMEN.

## **FAMILY NEWS**

We’ve received greetings from lots of friends who live away - Sarah Hall, Margaret Jacobsen, Margaret Strachan, Pat Thomas, Robert Beard, and from Israel and Peace Chinedu in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Although most of us seem to be coping well with the lockdown - keeping spirits up, exercising, gardening, reading more, clearing out - it is very frustrating and worrying for families. **Barbara Macmillan and Shelagh Beach** have daughters who are key workers, as is Father Tesfa Teferi’s wife **Seni**. **Claire Brooks** is feeling very frustrated by the restrictions on her normal visiting and meeting with the older people she supports; she is doing what she can by phone and some shopping. **Dr Victor Li** in York has had the virus and recovered.

**John Price** is getting used to living on his own; **Jean** seems to be doing reasonably well in her care home. **Kathleen Smyth** is happy after two successful cataract procedures. **David and Helena Stec** got back just in time from Australia (See page 10). **Sadie Jones** was less fortunate: she set off on a Caribbean cruise but as soon as it reached Barbados, they were immediately put in lockdown; Sadie turned ill and spent the return voyage in the ship's hospital wing. She was glad to get home and is feeling better now.

We send greetings and good wishes to all our members and friends. While most of us are isolated, worried and maybe in ill health, and unable to share services in church, let us remember each other in the St Andrew's family and keep each other in our prayers.

## BUT LIFE CONTINUES

Some of us are getting to grips with extra domestic chores -

and birthdays come around. Connor Fall made a super chocolate cake for his 11th birthday - and Martha tells this lovely story:

The neighbours organised a real surprise for him - people made birthday banners in their windows, some wrote in chalk on the road, and two little children wrote on the pavement outside our door and attached balloons to the lamp post. His best friend left him a birthday card and some sweets on his wall.



James dusting



At 8pm (it was a Thursday) we all went out for the annual clap for our NHS and after that the whole street sang Happy Birthday to him. Dan and Emma came round with all his presents from them and mum and dad; he got a swing ball set from mum and dad so Dan and Connor had a great time playing that for a while. It was a great day under the circumstances, and we will be doing the same for Connor's best friend on 3rd May for his birthday.

## WORSHIP CONTINUES

Some of us are following the URC services online or reading them quietly on our own, and **Douglas** puts an inspiring selection of hymns and anthems on our website each week - superb music along with pictures of beautiful cathedrals and wildlife.

[www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk](http://www.standrewsurcsheffield.org.uk)

**The Sheffield Team** have been very active in devising ways of presenting services online which we can all join in via the Zoom meeting app. Several of us are doing so regularly and find it a different but interesting experience. One is certainly more involved than when simply reading, listening or watching as on TV. Last Sunday (19<sup>th</sup> April) there were 72 participants, ie linked devices - which, allowing for couples, means that over 100 people joined in. Next Sunday (26<sup>th</sup> April) the service will be a communion, with your own bread and wine.

The link for these Sunday services is:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/196150653>

At the end of the worship, some participants stay online to chat in groups. Ray Smyth suggests that if more St Andrew's people joined in, we could have a special St Andrew's chatroom, and see and talk with each other for a little while.

## SERVICE CONTINUES

Although the Broomhill Breakfast has finished, our kitchen is still in use. **Open Kitchen** are not serving meals but last week delivered 160 meals and food parcels to 80 people, which is about as much as they can do in a day.

And a sister organisation called **FoodHall** has started using the kitchen on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and reckons to turn out about 400 meals there each week. Brendan Lal reports:

We have cooked about 3000 meals overall since March 23rd and will be topping 1000 in total this week. The city council have estimated that Monday 20<sup>th</sup> is the peak of the virus and the next 4 weeks will see maximum disruption in the city so this is the key moment in our effort. We have made about 70 portions each session, but expect to increase that this week when we will bring more ingredients over from Foodhall

*St Andrew's is not charging rent to either group during the lockdown.*

**FOOD BANKS** are under greater pressure than ever. The Jesus Centre is closed but the S6 Foodbank is using the **Broomhall Community Centre** as an outlet every Monday from 11am to 1pm. They are in need of both food and money donations.



**ethicalmuch.com** is a community support platform. They say:  
We purchase and deliver food parcels and other essentials to needy people, funded by our Good Deed fund. During this CV19 pandemic we are reaching out to vulnerable and under-resourced individuals and families and buying and delivering food, toiletries, and essentials for them. This is funded by kind people and businesses. We use 100% of the donations for point of need assistance. Our members can also post news and views onto the site.

Emergency food parcels in Sheffield for ETHICALMUCH are being organised by Bird Lovegod (a member of the Tennis Club). You can support him at:

[www.gofundme.com/f/emergency-food-parcels-in-sheffield](http://www.gofundme.com/f/emergency-food-parcels-in-sheffield)

**THE COMMUNITY CHOIR** is being very active in sending around all sorts of photos, jokes, musical pieces to keep spirits up.

### **THE TENNIS CLUB**

No play is as yet permitted but our courts have to be prepared in the Spring by removing the debris from winter storms and laying a fresh layer of Italian Clay. The new season's clay from Cremona has already arrived and two of our members will take responsibility for laying this down at the point when we anticipate play may be allowed to recommence.

Of course subs are due at this time of year too. Trying to respect individual's financial circumstances, we are asking for an initial £20 payment as a sort of holding payment which allows them to continue their membership and gives voting rights and allows participation in discussions over the next few weeks. The full adult sub is £90 and eventually only a proportion will be charged to represent the number of months that play happens. Last year we had 82 members and we hope that many will support us this year. The LTA are being very good to clubs and have refunded our subscriptions for this year.

*Margaret Fall*

**BUZZ** is keeping its activities going to BUZZ children and older people at home.

Entertainment packs for children or older people can be found at <http://buzzsheffield.co.uk> If you need an entertainment pack printing and sending to someone just email [hello@buzzsheffield.co.uk](mailto:hello@buzzsheffield.co.uk) stating whether the pack is for an older person or a child (Stating age of child).

To find out about our phone call check in service, or to ask us to support someone with another matter e.g. Job applications, you can also email [hello@buzzsheffield.co.uk](mailto:hello@buzzsheffield.co.uk)

To find out about our Zoom video service and postal service to replace child contact sessions email [childcontactcentre@buzzsheffield.co.uk](mailto:childcontactcentre@buzzsheffield.co.uk)

Follow us on social media for updates, weekly activities, competitions, support and to keep in touch !

<http://buzzsheffield.co.uk> TEL: 0114 2766174

NEW TEMPORARY ADDRESS to be used until further notice:

Buzz Sheffield, PO Box 5995, Sheffield S10 9HE.

## SYNOD NEWS

The pandemic cut short **the pulpit exchange** between the Revd Zaidie Orr and the Revd Bev Brazier from Whitehorse in the Yukon, Canada, just as they were getting to know the new people and places. Everyone was disappointed. They got back home just in time before the shut-down and hope to complete the exchange at a later date.

**The Sheffield vacancy** will go onto the moderators' list as normal in May and ministers can request the profile in early June. If we are then still in lockdown, or some form of restriction, an introduction can still go ahead to have a virtual meeting with the vacancy group. However, from then on it has to wait until face to face is allowed for the "preaching with a view" meetings to happen.

## LAST HOLIDAY ?

Helena and I were fortunate enough to have a really good holiday, just before the coronavirus crisis made travelling impossible. We returned to Australia for our fifth visit, and began by spending a few days in Sydney. While there, we went on the Bondi Coastal Walk as far as Koogie, a splendid walk along cliffs with fine views of the surf and lots of surfers on their boards. We also went by ferry to Manly, to repeat a walk that we had particularly enjoyed the previous year, to North Head in the Sydney Harbour National Park, with some stunning views across the entrance to the harbour with the skyline of the city in the background.

When we joined the coach tour, our first stop was at Port Macquarie, and we then proceeded to Byron Bay and Byron Point, the most easterly point in mainland Australia, which is approached by a high cliff-top walk, affording a superb view of the Point. Then we crossed into Queensland and went to Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast for a two-night stay. From there we had a half-day trip to Mount Tamborine, where we saw lots of kangaroos in a nature reserve and went for a walk in a section of rain forest. Back at Surfers Paradise, we strolled along the seafront and admired a display of expertly made sand sculptures, which were to be demolished the next day.

Going on from Gold Coast to Brisbane, we spent a short time sightseeing in the area around the Queensland state parliament building and the botanical gardens, and then left the city for a visit to the Australia Zoo, after which we went on to Noosa for a two-night stay. While there, we had a day-trip by boat among the everglades on the Noosa River.

The next day was spent on Fraser Island, the world's largest sand island, and a World Heritage Site. Our group transferred to two 4-wheel drive buses, which took us onto the ferry and then on the island took us several miles along the beach, which was used as the main road. We then turned off the beach and went along a very bumpy sand track through several miles of rain forest to Lake Mackenzie, a clear freshwater lake, in which several people went swimming, and Helena had a paddle. After lunch and a short walk in the rain forest, bus and ferry took us back to the mainland where we rejoined our coach and went on to Hervey Bay for the night.

Next to Rockhampton, where we crossed the Tropic of Capricorn. Next day, we continued north past numerous fields of sugar cane, and stopped at Sarina to visit a sugar refinery, which also distils rum. Then at Airlie Beach, we took the ferry to Hamilton Island, one of the Whitsunday Islands between the coast of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef. Our hotel room had a stunningly beautiful view of the seafront. The next day, we had a boat trip to Whitehaven Beach, considered to be one of the finest white beaches in the world. After sheltering from a heavy tropical downpour, we walked through the rainforest 770 metres uphill to the Whitehaven Beach Lookout, for a superb view of the beach and the area around.



The following day, back on the mainland, we resumed our journey, going through Townsville, the second largest city in Queensland, and stopping at a small place called Mission Beach. Then we went through some beautiful countryside across the Atherton Tablelands, a high tropical plateau, with very fertile farmland and abundant rainforests. We stopped at Millaa Falls, and after photographing the waterfall, watched turtles and catfish in the stream. Another stop for photos was at the famous Curtain Fig Tree. We then went on to Kuranda, from which we descended by cable car over the top of the rainforest, with more spectacular views. At the bottom, we rejoined the coach and travelled the short distance to Cairns. At dusk we watched the thousands of flying foxes fly past our room on their way to the other side of the Trinity Inlet, a spectacle that we enjoyed each evening while we were there.

The next day was an included trip to the Great Barrier Reef. The weather was not at all good; there was a cyclone with heavy rain and strong wind.

Before we got onto the boat, we were told that the sea would be rough. It was not too bad near land but as we got into more open waters our catamaran boat felt the full force of the storm. We were due to stop first at Green Island to drop off some of the passengers, and then go on to the Great Barrier Reef. However, our Tour Director decided that it would be too dangerous for us to continue to the Reef, so after the boat had moored with great difficulty, we disembarked onto the concrete jetty and waited with little shelter from the wind and rain for another boat to take us back to Cairns. Several people were seasick on the way back, and we later heard that because of the weather conditions our original boat had been unable to dock at the pontoon on the Reef. Fortunately, we had already done the same trip on a previous visit to Cairns. By way of compensation, we were given a very interesting guided tour of Cairn Aquarium in the afternoon.

We also had a day-trip to Cape Tribulation, 68 miles north of Cairns, which was given its name by Captain Cook after his ship struck a reef there and then ran aground, causing it to be damaged. We travelled along the Captain Cook Highway, a picturesque coastal road. Along the way we stopped at Mossman Gorge, for a short walk, and then on to the Daintree



River, where we had a boat ride. We saw a saltwater crocodile, an eagle and numerous red bats, sometimes flying and at other times hanging in the trees. At Cape Tribulation, where the rain forest at the beach meets the Great Barrier Reef, we had another short walk. After crossing the Daintree River by ferry, we stopped for ice cream at an orchard where tropical fruits are grown and used to flavour the ice cream made on site.

On our way back to the UK, we had a two-day stopover in Singapore. We realise how fortunate we were to have had this holiday. If it had been booked for just a week later, the tour would have been cancelled, and if our return had been due just three or four days later, it would have been very difficult to get a flight back.

*David Stec*

*{Given the current travel restrictions and uncertainty about the future, one can only envy David's great trip ! If you would like to tell us about some fantastic or favourite holiday you've been on, do send me your story. Ed.}*

## **Garden definitions:**

*We've been spending lots of time in and on the garden.*

*A garden makes sure you always have something to worry about !*

Green fingers: Black finger nails.

Furrow: A horizontal line on forehead of gardener.

Garden: One of a vast number of free outdoor restaurants operated by charity-minded amateurs in an effort to provide healthy balanced meals for insects, birds and animals.

Hose: Crude but effective and totally safe type of scythe, towed through garden to flatten flower-beds and level vegetable plantings.

Nursery: The only known place where money grows on trees.

Perennial: Any plant which, had it lived, would have bloomed year after year.

Bulb: Potential flower buried in autumn, never to be seen again.

Carrot: A special food grown for carrot flies.

Drought: Weather immediately following planting.

Harden off: Kill by frost

Hoeing: Manual method of severing roots from stems of newly planted flowers and vegetables.

## **Tae a Virus**

Twa months ago, we didna ken  
yer name or ocht about ye,  
But lots of things have changed since then,  
I really must salute ye.

Yer spreading rate is quite intense,  
yer feeding like a gannet,  
Disruption caused is so immense,  
ye've shaken oor wee planet.

Corona used tae be a beer,  
they garnished it wi' limes,  
But noo it's filled us a' wi' fear:  
These days are scary times.

Nae shakin' hawns, or peckin' lips,  
it's whit they a' advise,  
But scrub them weel, richt tae the tips,  
that's how we'll a' survive.

Just stay inside the hoose, ye bide,  
Nae sneakin oot for strolls;  
Just check the lavvy every hoor  
And stock-take your loo rolls.

Our holidays have been pit aff,  
Noo that's the Jet2 patter.  
Pit oan yer thermals, have a laugh  
And paddle 'doon the waater'.

Canary Isles, no' for a while,  
Nae need for suntan cream,  
And awe because o' this wee bug  
We ken tae be..19.

The boredom surely will set in,  
But have a read, or doodle,  
Or plan yer menu for the month  
Wi' 95 pot noodles.

When these run oot, just look about;  
A change, it would be nice.  
We've beans and pasta by the ton  
and twenty stane o' rice.

So dinny think ye'll wipe us oot.  
Aye true, a few have died.  
Bubonic, bird flu, and TB,  
They came, they left, they tried.

Ye might be gallus noo, ma freen,  
As ye jump fae cup tae cup,  
But when we get oor vaccine made  
Yer number will be up.

Willie Sinclair  
March 2020

## EARLY SCHOOL DAYS

I started school at Edinburgh Ladies College in Queen Street in May 1939. My fifth birthday was on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1939. My parents had originally intended to send me to James Gillespie's School but that would have meant changing trams in Princes Street and they knew that war was imminent. I went to Queen Street, one tram ride from my home and a walk down from Princes Street to the school. There were four girls from the Avenue where we lived all going to Queen Street.

I was taught by Miss Marjorie Brown. All the girls wore blue smocks over their school uniform. Our classroom was high up in the old building. One of the few memories I have of that time is taking part in the fire drill and being whisked down two or three flights of stairs by a couple of bigger girls. They went so fast I was suspended between them as we flew down the stairs and out into Rose Street Lane.

Before I could start back at school in September, war was declared. My father was at a Territorial Army (TA) Camp and my mother, sister and I were invited to stay with old friends of my parents at their house in Pathhead Ford. I remember the morning of the third of September very clearly: my sister was in the playpen, she would be fifteen months old, the radio was on and this voice said "Britain is now at war with Germany". It was clearly important judging by the silence and shock on the adults' faces.

My father was called up. He was an Electrical Engineer with Edinburgh Corporation Electricity Department, a protected occupation, and was over-age (39) but he was an officer in the TA and the army was short of officers. He was with the Eighth army and was sent to France.

Our school was commandeered as a first aid post; the Junior and Senior schools were taught at Daniel Stewart's College, alternating morning and afternoon school with the boys, week about. It must have been chaos for the parents. I was taught for a term at a house in Corstorphine, where I lived, with several other little people. I'm not sure when the infants were moved into a house in Ravelston very near Daniel Stewart's College, but just after Christmas I was evacuated from Edinburgh to Nethy Bridge near Grantown-on-Spey. My mother's parents, my mother, my little sister and I moved into a cottage in Nethy Bridge called Ben MacDhui. We had no electricity; my grandfather became expert at trimming the Aladdin paraffin lamps. They gave out a lovely soft light. We did have hot and cold water but that depended on the range in the living room; it was not allowed to go out. My mother made beautiful sponge cakes in it.

I went to the village school, a shortish walk through the forest beside the house. I was glad that my grandfather was able to take me to school and home again. The trees were very big and dark to a small 5 year old. There were lots of dragon flies zooming across our path. They looked enormous to me. I was taught in quite a large class, but had some catching up to do

as I had only learned my two times table and the class had learned all of their tables. My grandfather helped me to learn my tables as we walked to and from school. I remember reciting them every day for a few weeks until I knew all of them. I was well ahead in reading; the class were learning the alphabet and I had a reading book with stories from AA Milne. Each story had questions at the end and I was encouraged to work through these. I don't remember whether my mother sent for more books or they had them in the school but there was a never ending supply.

During this time, late May early June 1940, my father escaped from Dunkirk and was stationed in Aldershot with his unit. Mother went down to see him as he couldn't get leave to come and see us. Train journeys were difficult over long distances and I don't know what she thought when after many hours she arrived in Aldershot to be greeted by the news that dad was being allowed embarkation leave. Mum and Dad came straight up to Nethy Bridge where I think Dad had about a week with us. When Dad left, all Mum knew was that he was going to sail to South Africa, which he did and then he travelled up to North Africa, but that is another story.

*Jean Dickson*

*(Early memories are said to become stronger as one ages! Do share yours)*

### **GONE ARE THE DAYS**

Impossible to call a lamb a 'lambkin'  
Or say 'eftsoons' or spell you 'ladye'.  
My shining armour bleeds when it's scratched;  
I blow the nose that's part of my visor.

When I go pricking o'er the plain  
I say 'Eightpence please' to the sad conductress.  
The towering landscape you live in has printed  
on its portcullis '*Bed and Breakfast*'.

I don't regret it. There are wildernesses  
enough in Rose Street or the Grassmarket  
where dragons' breaths are methylated  
and social workers trap the unwary.

So don't expect me, lady with no e,  
to look at a lamb and feel lambkin  
or give me a down look because I bought  
my greaves and cuisses at Marks and Spencers.

Pishtushery's out. But oh, how my heart swells  
to see you perched, perjink, on a bar stool.  
And though epics are shrunk to epigrams, let me  
buy a love potion, a gin, a double.

*Norman McCaig*