

Article 5: Growing up on a croft in Lumphanan.

Part 2 – Skweel and beyond

by Ann Raeburn

In 1957 Brian and Kenny started at the old Lumphanan school, situated at the centre of the sprawling parish. Children from the village were bussed to school. Pupils living beyond 3 miles from school were issued with Council bikes. Oldtown Croft was just within that margin and so the Patersons had to buy their own! There were 100 plus children at the school, taking pupils from primary to final year education.



Lumphanan School, 1957, Brian's class

From left, back row: Davie Law / Bill Davidson / Kenny Geals / Peter Christie / Brian Begg/ Derek Soda? / Brian Paterson.

Middle row: Ronnie Dawson / Gordon Hepburn / Helen Davidson / Linda Grant / Leslie Stewart / Emma Gordon / Sidney Taylor / Davie Stuart

Front row: Rita Sutton? / Frances Hepburn / Barbara Christie / Lizzie Burnett / Mary Duffus / Nancy Emslie / Una Thomson / Heather Murison / Kathleen Thomson / Quita Thomson.



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Lumphanan School

1957

Kenny's class, 1957

From left, back row: Bill Murison / Willie Ellis / Gordon Hossack / Robert Gordon / Hamish McDonald / Stanley Taylor / Michael McIntyre / Sandy Mathers / Les Williams.

Middle row: Jim Thomson / Willie Ferries / Henry Gilbert / Philip Soda? / Kenny Paterson / Peter Ferries / Alan Stewart / William Millar / Norman Marshall.

Front row: Edith Christie / Mary Davidson / Sheena Gilbert / Aileen Stewart / Helen Adams / Liz McDonald / Suzie Sudden? / Hilda Hossack.



Brian and Kenny leaving for school

The Patersons attended lessons in a “timmer” (wooden) hut. There was no electricity. If children arrived at school wet from a stormy walk or cycle ride, clothes and footwear were hung to dry round the stove in the wooden hut classroom. Brian was in that classroom for 3 years.

Practical Classes also taught included beekeeping, gardening (each child had their own plot) and measuring ground using links and chains as the method of measurement. This was taught in the bottom park of Knappyround. In those pre-metric days a chain was equal to 66 feet or 22 yards. There were 10 chains in a furlong and 80 chains in a mile. Brian says he never used these forms of measurement when he left school.

Woodwork was an enjoyable class. Brian made a wheelbarrow, put to use on the family croft. Kenny made a small cupboard, a bathroom cabinet and a stool, still used in his house to this day.



***1963 In
Knappyround
bottom park***

*Back row from
left : Hamish
McDonald, Kenny,
Stanley Taylor.*

*Front row from
left: Teacher
Gillespie Munro,
Sheena Gilbert,
Helen Adams,
Aileen Stewart.*



Beekeeping. From left, Stanley Taylor, Kenny, and Hamish McDonald.

The school cooks provided excellent dinners. The eldest child in a family paid 1 shilling a week for dinner, followed by a sliding scale of 11d, 10d then free for the 4th sibling. Second helpings were always on offer; Brian once managed to consume 7 helpings of chocolate crackle and custard!

Once a year Dominie Davidson would entertain the school with a film, using a car battery to power the projector.

Loons and quines playgrounds were separated by a wall, quines being close to the Dominie's house and loons nearest the road. Snowballs aimed over the wall at the quines were a punishable offence with the Dominie using the strap. However, if you were acting with a loon whose Dad was on the Parent Council, only a verbal rebuke was issued!

A dentist visited the school regularly and woe betide a child if a filling was necessary as they had to suffer a foot-cranked drill. Children were lined up to have routine vaccinations and remained in line while they were jabbed!

Sports Day included a slow cycle race - the winner being last over the line, throw the cricket ball, sack race and netball. Every child enjoyed the treat of an ice cream. Highlight of the year was Aboyne Games, held on the first Wednesday in September. The boys would gather wild rosehips from the hedgerows. The hips were weighed at school and 3d a lb was paid - their spending money at the Games. The hips were sent to make rosehip syrup, a vital source of Vitamin C for children in post war Britain, which continued in production into the 1960s.

In snowy winter months when cycling to school was impossible, the boys would walk down the parks to the Mill of Auchlossan and up past the Pole to reach the school. Returning home would involve a stop to “news” with “Gatie” and a welcome warm up by his coal fire. Gatie manned the railway gates on the track to the small settlement at Milltown of Auchlossan. The engine drivers would ensure Gatie kept warm by throwing him a shovelful of coal as they chugged past! The boys would sometimes collect the scattered coals for Gatie.

Kenny hated “skweel” and couldn’t wait to leave. His final Summer term, aged 14 years, was a more positive experience. He and two girls were the last pupils to finish their school years at Lumphanan. Thereafter second year pupils were sent to Torphins. A young teacher had just joined the school and his method of teaching was rather revolutionary. Instead of sitting in class for a history lesson, Mr Gillespie Munro would pile the 3 pupils into his car and off they would drive to visit local stone circles, earth houses, and ruined castles. Kenny loved it and history came alive for him.

Tatty gathering took place during the two week school break in October. Every farm grew tatties, and all the loons and quines would be sent cycling round the farms to lift the tatties in a rota, starting daily at 8.00 am. Best wages were paid by the Smiths of Tulloch who paid 21/- a week. Most farms gave tatty pickers their dinner in the farmhouse, triple decker sandwiches often on offer. Geordie MacDonald of the travellers’ family at the Pole was a big lad and was always treated to an extra triple decker. Kincairnie paid the lowest wages; they handed out 14/6 and a cabbage!

Aged 14 years, Brian left school determined to work on a farm and was fee’d to Hillhead of Kintochee, north of the former Parkhill shop, for a year. Brian’s wage was £2 10 shillings for a 5 ½ day week. He was to share a “caaf” (a mattress filled with chaff) bed in the bothy with the other single man, Geordie.

On his first night away from home and first into the bothy, Brian lay in bed unable to sleep, wondering what Geordie was like. Would he be a large fellow and fill the bed, would he snore? In fact, Geordie turned out to be a fine companion and Brian has remained good friends with him through the years.

There was no water in the bothy; a basin was carried in and shared between Brian and Geordie. There was a little fireplace in the bothy but they had to find sticks for a fire themselves. Brian possessed an army greatcoat which kept out the cold but if it got wet (setting up stooks of corn could be a very wet job) he had little way of drying it and would need to put it on the following morning, still wet and heavy. The farmer’s wife, Mrs Lawson, fed them well in the farm kitchen. Farm workers did not always fare so well in Aberdeenshire.

After work, twice a week, Brian and Geordie would run down to the Muggarthaugh Hotel to play football. Added entertainment was found at Lumphanan Hall which held a dance on a Saturday night



Brian, Kenny and Dad (1962/3)

Kenny left skweel to be apprenticed to Jocky Morrison, a stonemason in Aboyne for 1/11d an hour. Kenny lived at home and would walk down the park to Auchlossan at 6.45 every morning, collect his bike from the neep shed and cycle to Aboyne for a 7.45 am start, come rain or shine, dark morning or summer light. As he neared Aboyne he would hear the chattering of men in the dark coming towards him. These were the Council men cycling to start work at the Council Depot.

Jocky Morrison's yard was where the tent-shaped houses are now built beside the Health Centre. The green play area in front of the 'tent' houses was then the Aboyne curling pond. If Kenny arrived back at the yard with an hour to spare before knocking off, he would be told to mix a bit of cement and build some more of the wall which now graces the left hand side of the road in to the Health Centre and Hospital.



Kenny's wall, Aboyne Hospital

Electricity finally came to the outlying farms and crofts of Lumphanan in 1965. That same year the school moved to new premises in the village. The railway line closed in 1966; life moved on.

So ended the happy rural childhood of two stalwarts of the local community. Brian has spent much of his adult life in Aboyne while Kenny has lived in Lumphanan for 64 years.

All photographs courtesy of Brian and Kenny Paterson.