

“A Childhood at Rannoch”, Part 4

Selected articles from the Rannoch School magazines

Introduction

Parents’ Day was an important annual occurrence in Rannoch School’s calendar. When I first read John Dunthorne’s account of “Parents’ Day 1963”, I was surprised to note how little the main events differed from my memories of the late 1960s and 1970s. Do you remember the early afternoon stream of cars heading through Kinloch Rannoch, along the south side of the loch and up the front drive of Rannoch School? The excitement of that special day is captured well here. There were cars parked everywhere and the school grounds were crowded with parents, families, Rannoch School boys and teachers. My father always told us at what time we could watch the Mountain Service lower some unfortunate “injured” boy on a stretcher from the roof of the main building. The fire and ambulance service also never failed to put on a good show and fun was had by all.

I found this article in the very first Rannoch School magazine, “Rannoch Record, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1964, pages 7 - 8. The Rannoch magazines have been archived by the **Rannoch Association Trust** and are available as pdf scans from www.exrannoch.com. Many thanks to those who have made their private photographs available on this website. I have unashamedly made good use of them for this article. I have also added Dougie Pickering’s Parents’ Day programme of 8th June 1974, just 11 years later, but still recognizable in its afternoon’s organization to all those who had the pleasure to attend such a glorious day at Rannoch School.

November 2017, Barbara Grimm-Zaluska

Parents’ Day 1963

The weather was hot and sultry and there were thunder clouds on the horizon when I arrived at the School on the morning of 8th June. After lunch, on which no comments will be passed, I strolled through the quiet grounds and was impressed once more by the idyllic setting in which the white School House gleamed in strong sunlight.

Soon groups of boys appeared, some in athletic kit and others in full kilted rig carrying bundles of coloured programmes.

Masters emerged, looking slightly harassed, to give last-minute instructions, and then the “first of the many” arrived. Bentleys, Mini-cars and others came winding up the drive in a procession which seemed endless. The allotted parking space was quickly filled and the Potteries became almost inaccessible behind the press of cars. Within an hour the scene was transformed from one of stillness and beauty to one of colour and gaiety.



Photo taken by Alastair ‘Haddie’ Finlay who sadly died in 2012

Then the activities started. Leggy youngsters in over-long shorts pounded round the track; keen sailors, engulfed in massive life-preservers, stood on the jetty and waited in vain for a breeze. The classrooms in which the static exhibitions were displayed were visited by a steady stream of interested spectators who examined scientific phenomena and the photographs of the School taken with its lights on for the first time. And the band played! A few boys led by their instructors gave us the rousing sound of pipes and drums and this really “made the day”. Their performance was not excellent; it may even have been not very good; but it added the final touch to the glorious picture. Gay summer dresses circulated on the green lawn; the loch gave an intensely blue wink through the dark conifers; and all was embraced by the grandeur of the surrounding hills.



Parents' Day, early 1960s, photo taken by Richard Ussher

Then we went in for tea and this was perhaps the most entertaining time of the day. Newcomers and old hands may well have found it rather amusing. Who would expect to find in the middle of the Scottish Highlands so many bankers, lawyers, stockbrokers, colonels



Fire Drill, 1963?, photo from Richard Ussher

from India and farmers from Kenya, and many others – all with wives, daughters and mothers-in-law – squeezed into the Scottish baronial style dining-room, perched on narrow benches around hefty tables, and consuming sardine and cream-cheese sandwiches and drinking hundreds of cups of very weak tea poured from gallon-sized teapots. And all enjoying it!

Towards the end of the second tea shift there was a great ringing of bells and the fire engine screamed round the front of the house. It

was rather difficult to see what was going on from inside but there seemed to be dozens of uniformed boys pouring out of the vehicle. Pumps were revved, ladders appeared against the house, an incredible network of hoses was laid out ... and they ran out of water.

This was followed by the Mountain Rescue lads appearing on the Wentworth



Mountain Service practising on Wentworth, early 1960s, photo taken by Richard Ussher

roof complete with anoraks, stretcher and miles of nylon rope. While Mr Haines provided a running commentary a body was lowered down the side of the house in a very professional manner. The R.A.F. will have to look at its laurels!

A short time later a chilling scream rang out from the tree-tops and a white-clad body hurled itself downwards – into the safety net cunningly concealed in the rhododendrons. There was another great ringing of bells, this time from the ambulance. In a trice the “casualty” was trussed up in bandages, strapped to a stretcher, and whisked off in a spray of gravel. It must have been comforting for all the mothers present to know that such precautions were taken for the safety of their off-spring.



Parents' Day, 1962?, photo taken by Richard Ussher

Fortified by tea and stirred by these exciting events we wended our way through the trees towards the gymnasium accompanied by the music of pipes and drums.

When we had all assembled the School was honoured by the presence of the now late Mr Gilmour Leburn, M.P. for Kinross and West Perthshire, and his wife. Mr Leburn made a tactfully short oration offering due praise to the three founders and to the way in which they had developed the School to its present standard of progress.

Mr Greig gave his annual Parents' Day Address which summed up the achievements and progress of the School and presented his plans for the near future. It was encouraging to note the progress made by the Sports teams and especially by the rugger players. Great strides had been made in the building programme, the new sanatorium being all but completed and the Chapel showing promise of being a fine building. The examination record for last July was not so good. However, this was redeemed at Christmas with a high percentage pass. Mr Greig went on to thank the parents for their many generous donations to the school. He ended by stressing the fact, that, although considerable progress had been made, the School was at a stage when it must not rest on its laurels but continue to strive for improvement.

After the speeches were over, the great trek began and fleets of cars departed with parents and boys who must have filled the hotels for miles around, most of them finishing the day with an evening of pleasure.

Back in their homes and offices, their farms and their factories, the parents would reflect upon all they had seen at Rannoch and perhaps wish that they had had such opportunities in their young days. They would certainly be happy that their sons are so admirably encouraged to make the most of their youth and of life.

John Dunthorne

Parents' Day Programme 1974, from Dougie Pickering

RANNOCH SCHOOL

PARENTS' DAY

Saturday 8th June 1974

AFTERNOON PROGRAMME

- 2.00-2.45p.m. Sailing Race on Loch Rannoch if weather permits.
(Loch Patrol in attendance)
- 2.45-3.05p.m. Fire Service Demonstration at Old Fire Station.
- 3.20p.m. Judo Display by Rannoch School Judo Club on Front
Lawn. (If wet, in Judo Room; Juniors - 3.20p.m.
Seniors - 3.40p.m.).
- 3.50p.m. Mountain Service Rescue Demonstration on the South
Facade of Dall House.
- 4.30p.m. *Presentation of Prizes and Duke of Edinburgh Gold
Awards by Col. C.H.K. Corsar.
The Chairman of Governors, the Rev. Prof. Robin
Barbour, M.C., M.A., B.D., will preside, and the
Headmaster will give his Report. All boys are
expected to attend.
- *Car parking is very limited at the Gymnasium.
Visitors are requested to refrain from taking their
cars unless this is really necessary.

TEA is available in the Dining Hall from 2.45p.m. to 4.20p.m. There
will be continuous service.

EXHIBITIONS: The following are open all afternoon unless otherwise
stated.

Art - Art Room	Photographic Society - Room 8
Biology Society - Glad's Biology Lab.	Physics Projects - Physics Labs.
Community Service - by School Office.	Technical Department - Workshops: open 12.30-3.30p.m.
Chemistry - 'O' Chemistry Lab.	Tuck Shop
Fire Service - New Fire Station.	Year Book - Room 5
Geography - Room 5.	
Meteorological Service - Weather Stn. (beyond Sanatorium).	
Mountain Service - display at Stores and on Assault Course; Slides - Room 2.	
Music - Music Room.	

In the event of bad weather, all outside events will be cancelled,
and the Speeches and Presentation of Prizes will commence earlier. Tea
will be available both before and after the Speeches, and the indoor
exhibitions will continue as normal.

Sunday 9th June

Chapel Service at 7.45p.m. to which all Parents and Friends are
cordially invited. Preacher: The Rev. H. Gibson, M.A., B.D.

Boys should report to their House Captains by 7.50p.m. other