



THE WAR BABY

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SIDNEY M^cKECHNIE GALLAGHER

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Dedication to

Joyce my wife who was a tiger



INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I first met Wendy McGuire, I never thought that she would have been the one to put my book together in print. After all the empty promises and let-downs I had from professional writers and family members for over two years Wendy took my hand written notes and put them into print in four weeks. This was remarkable considering that this is her first attempt at typing and printing, and she also has six girls to look after by herself. May God love her.

Also special thanks to my friend John McGinley. Who came to see me in prison, took care of all my mail, keeping all my case papers and sending my mail to MPs etc. Thank you John.

Pat Cassidy is another friend who also came to see me in prison and made sure I needed for nothing, thank you Pat. And thanks to all the people who helped me get through my prison hell. Father Neil Gallagher; Prison Padre, and the Rev Helen Douglas, Minister Noranside Open Prison, Rev Andy Inglis, Prison Chaplain and his wife May; Sheena McGregor, Art Teacher Barlinnie prison; Wee Jane, Personnel Officer Greenock Prison; Mary Guild, Art Teacher Greenock Prison; Val Parry, English Teacher, Dungavel Prison; Clare Harris, The Big Issue, and all the prisoners, and the decent prison officers who helped me to keep my head together. God bless them all. A very special thanks must go to Joan Ferguson the only independent witness to come forward. Thank you, Joan.

*Sidney McKechnie Gallagher,
June 2010.*

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Chapter 1

WAR AND EVACUATION TO RHU

I was born at Dalmuir, Clydebank, Dunbartonshire on the 30th June 1939. The son of John and Delia (Taylor) Gallagher. My parents had ten children, five boys and five girls. Though I lived the first six months of my life in Clydebank and the next year or so in Luss I was too young to have any memories of it and my first memories are of a wonderful little village by the sea on the West Coast of Scotland.

For a young boy of three, the village of Rhu, Dunbartonshire, on the banks of the Gareloch was the most stunning playground imaginable. Miles of shoreline and wooded hills set the imagination running this way and that. Time did not exist. Often, dinner-time didn't exist as we played on and on with boundless energy. We experienced life to the full in that place, and even today the memories of joy-filled hours, sun glancing on water, and leafy canopies swaying above our heads stays with me.

During the war many children were evacuated within Scotland but they were cast into cultures as alien as if they had been sent to the other side of the world. At that time the difference in language, accents and customs could be just as foreign thirty miles from home, as those three thousand miles away.

I was also lucky in that most of the young members of my family were with me except my sister Delia who had been killed in the Clydebank Blitz that my family had fled from. We now lived, not among bombed out tenements, but in a very large mansion house set in extensive grounds overlooking the Gareloch called "Duneira". The house faced the sea and was accessed through a grand, walled, and gated entrance off Gareloch Road, leading up a drive through the lovely grounds to the fine big front entrance. How different from our parents homes and the homes of the eight other evacuated families who lived

with us there. But the communal spirit had transferred from the tenements and was very strong.

My brother William was fighting in Burma, my brother John was in the Royal Navy, but myself, my four sisters Margaret, Alicia, Irene and Mary and my other brothers Peter and Robert were all part of what was a very large extended refugee family transported to these fine surroundings.

My father, John (Johnny) Gallagher, was a shipwright to trade and worked hard repairing ships at the Faslane Naval base, which was set in a big bay that acted as an anchorage for ships serving the busy military port. He would work very long hours there, sometimes twelve hours a day. I remember waiting for him to come home and when I saw him I would run towards him with all the speed I could muster. He always kept me one of his sandwiches and I ran to him every night to get my "piece" as it was called in Scotland.

Years later when I re-called those moments my mind would attach the song "When Johnny Comes Marching Home". It was like an unofficial sound track to my memories of him. "...we'll give him a hearty welcome then and we'll all feel good when Johnny comes marching home". I treasure those memories as they are the only ones I have of him.

On 7th October 1944 my father was walking home from work in Rhu during a blackout when a bus left the road in the dark and struck him. He was killed instantly. I was only four and a half years old at the time and the memory can play tricks, but I seem to remember my dead father lying in a coffin in our living room. I imagined he had become a guardian angel standing at the end of my bed, protecting me and telling me everything would be alright.

As I grew up I learned more about my father from the stories and memories of others. By all accounts he was a strong character and the stories made me wish I could have known him better. He was a communist from Red Clydeside.

I found out that we had been evacuated once before, to Luss, on Loch Lomond. There my father had a disagreement over politics with the local minister. To make his point my father had raised a Soviet, Hammer and Sickle flag over the roof of the manse. It was

not long after this that we were re-evacuated from rural Luss to rural Rhu.

I always thought that if my dad, a communist from Red Clydeside could get away with raising the red flag on the manse, and then swing it to come back as an angel, he must have had some sway with the main man himself.

My mother, Delia (Taylor) came from Anderston, Glasgow and she ran the Red Cross in Dalmuir West before and after the blitz until we were evacuated. She was a strong woman and once during an argument about seats in the picture hall a man said to my father “your wife is arguing with a man Johnny”. Father said “he will be sorry” and sure enough he was—she knocked a man over the seat with one punch.

Mother was in charge of a Red Cross unit in Clydebank because she was a good organiser and paid attention to detail. When her daughter Delia was killed the death certificate referred to her as Gallacher; did not give her occupation, age, or the names and occupations of her parents. You might think that this was understandable when over 500 people were killed in Clydebank in two nights of bombing, but my mother petitioned the Sheriff who issued a written order to the Registrar to enter Corrections to the entry for Delia dealing with the four mistakes/omissions. These things mattered to my mother.

Although we were evacuated to the countryside to get away from the city, Rhu was hardly the quiet backwater that some might expect. It was a cosmopolitan place as there were many servicemen of different nationalities. There were also German and Italian POW's (Prisoners of War). They provided us with lots of winter fun. Passing prisoners under escort would lift the young girls and boys onto their shoulders and carry them on the road to school keeping us high above the ground and out of the snow.

The evacuated children would gather together and hide behind hedges and walls with a stockpile of snowballs. Groups of soldiers or airmen would pass and one solitary child would ask if they were Scottish or English. If they said English, about twenty kids would stand up from behind the hedges and pelt them with snowballs. On one occasion when challenged a big black American guy said he

was Scottish. We had a good laugh, left him alone and pelted his mates all about him.

It is very sad to think what is stockpiled at Gareloch now. Any waste from our melting snowballs would have seeped into the earth. Now the waste of nuclear reactors and weapons seeps into the waters of the Gareloch, and the environmental body charged with monitoring this, SEPA, has no clout to deal with the incompetent stewardship of nuclear materials by the MOD (Ministry of Defence).

Anyway the American servicemen were very kind to us. Maybe they missed their own families, maybe they worried they would never survive to see their own kids again or, if they were younger even be given the chance to have a family. Maybe we were their family for that short period of time. Whatever, they would take all the kids from Rhu on their landing craft over the Gareloch to the American base at Rosneath. There they would hold parties for us and make sure we enjoyed ourselves, had plenty to eat and had lots of gifts to take home.

There was so much kindness towards all the children from all the different combatants that in later years you had to wonder what all the fighting was about. Surely these men would prefer to be at home with their families and their own children.

Now and again we did get into trouble, if you could call it that. Bother would probably be a more appropriate word. On one such occasion my brother Robert and I, along with some of the other boys, were coming home from school when we saw this lovely horse in a field. It was so nice and friendly that we decided we just had to take it home with us to graze in the grounds of Duneira. The horse seemed to have no objection and came with us quite willingly.

Later that evening the police came with farmer Patterson, the owner, who reclaimed our new pet, and we were told that we could feed the horses and cattle, but we could not bring them home as they were not pets, but working animals. All the women folk were laughing and cuddling us. I thought years later that if this had happened in Clydebank or Glasgow we would have

been charged with stealing a horse and we would certainly not have been cuddled.

As we got older the “Bother” we got into increased but it wasn’t malicious. But I can see now, looking at it from an adult point of view it was dangerous. Even so, thinking back, the eight year old in me thinks, “Naw it wisnae”.

When my older brother John came home from the Navy, in about 1947, he was told we were all out playing, and as he desperately wanted to see us he came looking for us straight away. What is now the marina at Rhu was then a top-secret RAF base, the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment (MAEE) for testing secret weapons in seaplanes, but the security was only meant to keep out German spies or Fifth Columnists and it was no match for Clydebank’s finest.

John found us all at MAEE playing war games with live ammunition. We had climbed into the RAF billets and got hold of the Very rocket distress flare pistols. We then climbed on to the floats of the Sunderland Flying bombers and pretended they were our boats. When John arrived he was horrified to see groups of eight-year-old evacuee boys firing distress flares at each other.

Strangely enough the authorities were never involved in this incident, but John did tell all the women and mums at the big house. That got us a terrible roasting and I think we would have preferred a severe talking to from the police. To this day I can picture the blonde head of my brother Robert—who could get in and out of the cockpits in minutes—sitting in the pilot’s seat of a seaplane as if he owned it. I reckon if we had been at Rhu a few more years Robert would have flown a Sunderland seaplane out of the Gareloch.

Since those happy times I have spoken to some evacuees who were treated with suspicion and caution. Who were called dirty, and were treated as though they were expected to be thieves. We never experienced this first hand. But there were others who passed through Rhu who were treated with more suspicion than the POW’s, and were even disparaged by the adult evacuees, they were the travellers.

“The Tinkers” or the “Travelling People” were Highland gypsies, and were given a wide berth. We were told never to go near them. Of course we did not heed these warnings. They held a fascination for us. We were told that they would spirit us away to a different place. But that had happened to us already and it had been great fun.

The Tinkers would camp on the shores of the loch and we would sneak away to join them by their firesides. They were fascinating people. They told stories, read palms, and they called us “Nakens”. They told us that was their word for non travellers.

Tinkers had their own language known as “Cant”, and at times they would lapse into it if they did not want us to understand what they were saying. Their stories were spellbinding and more often than not referred to the supernatural. They spoke of the Faerie people. “The People of Peace”. Adding, “But its’ little of peace that they ken”.

There were accomplished pipers among those “Gaun aboot fowk”. Many of the stories they told were about a changeling child that the Faeries had stolen away from where it belonged, and put a changeling in its place. Years later when I was living a nomadic life travelling about looking for work and staying in a van, I thought back on these folk and I wondered if I had become a changeling child. What else could explain the way that life’s path fell before me.

One night as we listened to their stories over the flying embers of their fire, one of their women stood up and said, “It is time”. She wandered off into the woods opposite the shore. Later that night she returned with a child in her arms. I thought at the time that the child was a changeling that she had stolen.

To me the tinkers were lovely people, nothing like the rogues we were warned away from. They told stories of the great Highland Famine, when their families, cleared off the land to make way for sheep, were then sent by sailing ship to Canada. Some did not want to leave and had taken to travelling the road. The term “Tinker” was, as I found out years later not a derogatory term. It came from the Gaelic, meaning “Tinceard” or tin-smith.

Eventually these metalworkers became scrap dealers and then horse traders. They now drive 4x4's towing caravans and live on permanent sites provided by local authorities. The pressure for them to adapt and conform to modern society has strangled them into submission. Employment, health and the social services all require a fixed address. But I wonder if they are as happy living in council schemes?

It is only with hindsight that we can see that these people were the heirs and custodians of a Gaelic culture. A culture of storytelling, folklore, singing and music. A tradition of travelling people that can be dated back to the 12th

Century. They are gone now. But as a young evacuee during the Second World War, I was with them and spent happy times among them before they disappeared. The McPhees, Townsleys, Morrisons Stewarts and Sinclairs that I knew (or their descendants) are now probably living in multi-story flats.

Our time at Rhu was punctuated by many events. Small in comparison to the events gripping the world, but momentous for us, and for the many families like us, who were losing loved ones due to the global turmoil.

In 1941 my sister Delia aged 15, and family friend Michael John Sidney McKechnie, who I am named after, had died in an air raid shelter hit by a bomb during the Clydebank Blitz, and there was a sadness about my parents because of this, and no doubt other losses. Even as young as I was I was aware of the grief for my big sister among my family members and I was saddened too.

Then later in 1946 there was joy at the news that my older brother Willie was coming home from Burma, where he had been fighting the Japanese. A celebration was planned and the people of the village of Rhu had put flags and bunting out. A big sign saying, "Welcome Home Gall (his nickname)", was hung up for all to see.

I remember these times as being ones of extremes of emotions. We celebrated with joy the return of the hero. The man who had travelled thousands of miles to fight an enemy so fanatical, that they were beyond our comprehension. And we

also grieved for my sister Delia a young girl blown apart on the streets of her home town, and for my father struck down in the dark. The world was changing and things would never be the same again.

It didn't take long for Gall to go from conquering hero to public enemy number one. No one could have understood what Gall had seen and experienced in Burma. He never spoke of it. But he soon descended into bouts of drinking. One month after celebrating his homecoming, Gall smashed up the village pub and broke windows in the big house where we lived.

Then one night the police arrived at Duneira to question Gall about some misdemeanour. He was woken from a drunken stupor and saw them as they approached the house up the driveway. He seemed to crack and screamed, "Japanese outside". He dived through a window one story up and landed on top of the police at the front door below. The horrors of combat in the Burmese jungle were even affecting rural Dunbartonshire.

Gall was taken away and put in an army hospital to recover from the horrors of the war and the demons that wracked his soul and inhabited his mind.

Though Gall survived the war physically, the scars on his mind never fully healed, and he went from job to job, and woman to woman without finding contentment or peace of mind. It was reckoned that my brother Willie Gallagher fathered 26 children after he came home.

Gall died in the 1980's aged sixty six, and though the official cause of death was cancer of the liver, his sclerosis was not the cause of his death. The cause of his death was the war in the jungle, a war that had him screaming at imagined "Japanese Bastards" and firing an imaginary machine gun when he was drunk. I have met some of his children. There is a strong military tradition with his sons, and I am glad that most of his children have done well, some very well. This is remarkable considering their less than privileged beginnings in the tough Anderston, Townhead and Maryhill districts of Glasgow.

Our childhood at Rhu was in many ways a good time and we never thought of ourselves as “War Babies”, which is what we referred to after the war ended.

My sisters Margaret, Alicia and Irene, were in their teens during the war (Mary was married), and had many young men from the forces to date them or walk them home from dances. Sometimes they would tell the young men that they were very wealthy and were the daughters of the owners of the fine mansion, Duneira. They would tell the other women the next day and have a laugh about it.

There was a main entrance to Duneira and a side or “tradesman’s entrance” that we normally used, but when the girls came home with sweethearts they used the grand entrance. If any of the other kids were playing in the grounds when they returned in the evening with their dates, they would tell them that these were the children of the gardener and his wife.

Some time after the war ended (1947 or 1948) our family moved from Rhu to Clydebank but my memories of rural Dunbartonshire live with me to this day and as often as I can I return to that place where I was so happy and unhappy in turn. How much of my nostalgia is genuine memory and how much gained from anecdotes I grew up with I can’t tell, but I do know how much Rhu meant to me and I now make the 20 mile journey back there every six weeks or so to lay flowers on my father’s grave at Faslane Graveyard, Garelochhead. His residence at the time of his death was said to be Duneira, Rhu.

My dad’s funeral was a very large gathering as he was a popular man and well respected. Many years later, when I found that where he was buried was not marked I made a crucifix and erected it at his grave. I never asked anyone’s permission as I don’t like officials and they probably would have come up with some reason that I couldn’t do it. It is only a simple wooden cross with a steel plate but it was made and put up with love and respect.



Clydebank families went from scenes like this at West Dalmuir, Clydebank, 1941 after a blitz, to this:



Beautiful Duneira house and gardens set in the idyllic countryside at Rhu overlooking the Gareloch. We lived in the top floor right hand side room with the nice bay window seen here.



*This aerial view of Rhu gives some idea of the beauty of the place. Duneira is opposite the marina (not there in our time)
Faslane in the distance.*



*Scottish travellers
or tinkers*



Many sea- planes similar to this Short Sunderland bomber were moored at Rhu during the war:

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Register of Corrected Entries

for the District of Old Kilpatrick,
in the County of Dumfriesshire.

In the First column of Entry No. 502
in the Register Book of Deaths for the Year 1901 for
"Callaghan" substitute "Callaghan", and after "Callaghan"
insert "Daughter of James". In the Fourth
column insert "15 years" and in the Fifth column
insert "John Callaghan, Shipwright, Delia
Callaghan, m.d. Taylor".

The above correction and insertion are
made under the direction and by the written
authority of the Sheriff, (dated 17th May 1901) in
consequence of the deposition of Mrs Delia Taylor m.
Callaghan mother of the deceased Delia Callaghan

17th May 1901
at Salween

- Geo. Hall
Assistant Registrar

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman standing together. The man on the left is wearing a suit and glasses, and the woman on the right is wearing a dark dress. They are both looking towards the camera.

The Correction brought about by Mother's deposition to the Sheriff (bottom left) and dad Johnnie and mother Delia (bottom right).

Chapter 2

PEACE, CLYDEBANK AND SCHOOL

Nothing could have prepared us for the changes that took place when we moved to Clydebank after the war was over. In all of our time at Rhu we never experienced anything in the way of Catholic/Protestant sectarianism. I do remember my older brother Robert giving the son of the local policeman a hiding. In later years I found out that it was to do with that kind of hatred. Hatred, I was to experience often in years to come.

At Elgin Street School in Clydebank, the young Gallagher children began their education. But our first lesson was in religious education but not the type we expected. During the playtime on the very first day at school, I was approached by a boy called Andy Benham. Andy asked me my name, and the innocent in me, thinking he wanted to get to know me in order to make friends told him. "Sidney McKechnie Gallagher" I proudly answered. Andy turned to the rest of the kids in the playground and shouted, "We've got a Pape here. Gallagher's a Papish name".

We were soon surrounded, and the kids in the playground hit out at Margaret my sister, Robert and I. We had no idea what was happening. We had never experienced anything like this at Rhu. We fought back as best we could and eventually we were rescued by teachers who heard the commotion and came running. They told us not to worry about it and said we should just get on with our work.

After school that day we walked home talking of what had happened and wondering why they had been so horrible to us. As we crossed Elgin Street Bridge we were attacked again. This time however, it was the turn of the Catholics. We heard a big roar and looked up to see a crowd of boys from Our Holy Redeemer's School, which was less than a mile from our school.

As they bore down on us we heard a boy cry, "Get the dirty turncoat bastards". The incident was branded into my subconscious and was to play a major part in my later life.

There was also another incident that was to have an affect on my later adult life. I was playing with a whole crowd of boys in Whitecrook, the housing estate where I lived. I and a boy called David Grainger were arguing with each other and it eventually ended in a fight. I lived at 50 East Barns Street and he lived at no 34 East Barns Street. A punch-up, in those days was pretty civilised, and the first one to cry lost the fight. Grainger soon started crying so I won, although I was desperately holding back my own tears. I got to my house and washed my face in the bathroom, where I cried and washed my face at the same time. The next time I met Grainger, he was to get the better of me, but more of that later.

Eventually we were accepted at Elgin Street School, but you still had to go through the rough and tumble of school life in Clydebank, which after our tranquil time at Rhu, was an eye opener. The aggression and violence of the kids was everywhere. It was an everyday thing. One boy, Adam Maxwell, who was a bookish sort of boy and a Dux medallist, caught me fighting with his friend, John Murray. I had the upper hand and Adam said, "Leave him alone and fight me instead". I said "OK" thinking that I could take him easily. What I did not know was that he had been to boxing training and was keen to test his skills outside the ring. I went charging at him and he picked me off time and time again. My head was full of lumps. I didn't give up though. Eventually Adam said, "OK that's enough, you're the winner Sid". I was clapped on the back by the others. But an important lesson was learned by me—appearances can be deceptive.

The next day at school my head was black and blue and the teacher Mr Easdale, asked me who I'd been fighting with. When I told him he asked "Who won"? I said me. He started to laugh. I hadn't noticed that Adam Maxwell's fists were all swollen up just like my head. But now I know why Adam was the Dux medallist. He was clever enough to use me as a punch bag.

The transition from the gentle and caring times at Rhu to the fear, aggression and mistrust we encountered in Clydebank was a painful experience. It was though one that you eventually adjusted to. It put you on the defensive and made you fight back and take care of yourself, because no one else was going to. Our time in the country had made us fit and the air had made us healthy so when we fought back we were strong in the doing of it. It soon became apparent to the kids in the Catholic and Protestant schools that we could more than stand up for ourselves. Whether this engendered fear or respect I do not know, but it wasn't long before they left us alone.

One of the seminal moments that gave us that respite and in a strange way the respect of the others was when a gang of twenty boys confronted us. They were Catholic boys and told us we were playing on their place. My brother Robert picked up a half brick. Their leader came forward and said, "There's my head. Hit it if you dare". Without hesitation Robert brought the brick down on his head. He went down like a sack of coal. Robert turned and still with brick in hand looked at all the others. They all backed off taking their stricken leader with them.

After this we were respected in the Whitecrook part of Clydebank and not many people wanted to cross us. It is strange. I have had many friends in Clydebank both Catholic and Protestant. And I must say that I have never harboured any feelings of hatred towards any faith. During our time at Rhu we never experienced hatred. Maybe the war brought out the best in so many people that hatred was banished for a time.

I eventually went to Clydebank High School and discovered that I was good at Art, History, Geography, Woodwork and Technical Drawing for which I got very high marks and was below average in Maths, English and Science. When the marks were averaged out I came first in the class. This incurred the wrath of my science teacher, Mr. Craig. He used to sneer at my name, Gallagher, commonly an Irish Catholic name. I discovered that he was a bitter old Protestant who took it ill that some of his class pets were beaten by someone he considered a Catholic. My Scottish lineage and Protestant religion meant nothing to the bigoted teacher.

I have since found out through reading Scots and Celtic history that the first Gallaghers in Britain were in Argyle in Scotland fighting for King Kenneth McAlpine. This was 500 years before the Royal Stewarts, Milnes, Skenes, Maxwells and Buchans came from France. Gallagher derives from the Scots Gaelic Galloglass: ‘Foreign help’ as they were mercenaries and fought for whoever would pay the highest fee.

Religion meant nothing to me and I spent most of my time outside school with my pal, Jim Daly an R.C. Jim and I built boat boogies, consisting of two bikes joined together with a seat between them. We also built huts in our back garden or on the “plots” (land allotments for growing wartime vegetables) and we would live in them all weekend and get up to all sorts of mischief. On a Friday night when most men got drunk we would put a brick under a dried milk tin and hide in the hedge rows till a drunk man came by. The man would kick the can with all his might and end up lying on the ground crying in pain much to our delight.

If I had learned not to take people at face value with the hammering I took from the boxer Adam Maxwell the lesson was re-emphasised on another occasion while I was at high school. This time I was aware that the boy who wanted to fight me was a boxer. Hamilton was his name and he had arranged to have a “square go” with me at four o’clock after school. Hamilton was so sure of himself that he had also arranged to fight another boy, Jake Donnelly at the same time.

Jake was first to go and this suited me just fine because though Jake looked like a professor with his round NHS spectacles that were as thick as bottle bottoms he was a friend of mine and I knew him to be a Judo expert and not the speccky fool that Hamilton called him. Jake insisted on going first with Hamilton and I didn’t argue with that. Hamilton came out with his boxer’s stance, puffing out his cheeks, jabbing and feinting. But every time his fists came within reach of Donnelly he simply grabbed his wrist and flipped him over on his back. Eventually when Hamilton was finished, lying exhausted, beaten, and in tears on the ground, I walked

over, prodded him with my boot, and reminded him that he still had to fight me.

Being left to your own devices not only encourages self confidence, but it also means that you learn from the school of hard knocks. It follows that you tend to get into a lot of bother. I suppose that it was inevitable that I would get into trouble as because that is what young guys did and I just went along with the flow. I suppose I was impressionable and when I saw gangs of older boys standing on the street corner looking tough and having a laugh I wanted to emulate them.

One character who I admired was Thomas Connelly or “Conchie” as he was known. He was 10-years or so older than me and when we would come out of school he would be standing on the street corner along with the other members of the Bisley Boys, the local gang who took their name from the Bisley Buildings situated at the corner of Elgin Street and Glasgow Road.

Conchie was a big tall man (6’ 2” which is big for Glasgow area) with broad shoulders and jet black hair and he was always smartly dressed, entirely in black all the time. We used to think of him as our Doc Holliday, the legendary dentist friend of Wyatt Earp. Conchie removed a few teeth in his day, but not with surgical instruments. He was always good to me though he was something of an enigma, a clever man and a talented artist who could talk on any subject, yet also a drunken gangster.

Conchie only worked once a year when the Singer Sowing Machine factory imported their bulk timber for making packing cases. While this task of unloading baulks of wood from railway wagons and taking them into the factory went on, Conchie worked like a slave and then when it was over he went back to his gang life. There was no initiation ritual or membership criteria for joining gangs, but in my neighbourhood we just sort of drifted into the Young Bisley Boys and then on to the senior gang. We never harmed anybody in our area but fought among ourselves and with other gangs from other areas of Clydebank and sometimes further afield.

Most of the boys I knew were just as likely to carry the shopping bag of an old woman or man, than bother them. Often

the fathers of the gang members had been in the same gang and the young boys leaving school were following in a tribal family tradition that still goes on to this day in some areas.

When I look back, this tribalism and culture of fighting and hard drinking was a mugs game, but when leaving school at 15 it seemed like the right thing to do, gave us a sense of belonging, as if we were part of something special. Gang life also engenders a freedom of spirit and an independent nature. You are in charge of your own destiny. So it was that at the age of fifteen when we left school I set off for London with two of the Young Bisley Boys full of confidence.



Mum Delia with son Sidney 1939



My old school, with the girl's entrance and playground this end, nearest John Knox Street, and the boys gate at the far, Elgin Street end.



Bisley buildings at the corner of Glasgow Rd and North Elgin St. The “Mainbrace” Bar was once the Bisley Bar and this was where the Bisley Boys congregated.

Chapter 3

FIFTEEN AND ON THE ROAD TO LONDON

To many young Scots in the 1950's London was the place to go. That was where jobs were highly paid and plentiful. When I went there with two of my mates on leaving school we took an axe with us, as we thought London was full of gangsters. The axe was a bit of bravado, but the Metropolitan Police did not see it that way and we were soon arrested and charged with carrying an offensive weapon. At Bow Street Magistrates Court we were admonished and ordered to return to Glasgow forthwith.

Undeterred I was soon on my next foray south with another crony called Bert Drummond. Bert and I decided to go to Blackpool, hitch-hiking all the way. We walked for miles, hungry and tired, and I told Bert that I had seen a film about a guy hitch hiking. The guy left his suitcase at the side of the road and hid in the hedges till a car driver stopped to see what was in the suitcase. The guy then ran out and told the car driver it was his case and he had been in the hedgerow doing a pee, so this way he got a lift.

Thinking this a brilliant plan, Bert left his case by the roadside and we hid in the hedgerow waiting for our lift. As we peered out we saw a lorry run right over Bert's case bursting it open. Shirts and towels sped off into the distance wrapped around the wheel and the rest of his gear strewn about the roadside.

Bert was furious. It took days for us to get to Blackpool. All we ate on the way were tomatoes stolen from a greenhouse. We gorged on them and eventually paid the price in red diarrhoea. We were terrified to fart without taking down our trousers. When we eventually got there we were starving. We walked around the town trying to figure out what to do next. As we

passed a café window I saw two girls eating. I rubbed my stomach making a hungry gesture and they motioned us to come in. We told them our hard luck story and they treated us to a meal. They wished us good luck before they left putting down a two shilling tip for the waiter. Needless to say the two bob did for our next meal.

I had my first lover in Blackpool. She was 22 years old and had just split from the guy she was going to marry. We got on well but Blackpool love is not for keeps.

On one of my trips back to Clydebank I took the first tentative steps towards a life of crime. My friend Billy White and I both came under the influence of a local psychopath named Tommy or "Tottsie" Pollock as he was known, he was the leader of the Bisley Boys, or any other gang in Clydebank for that matter. There were other gangs; The Kilbowie Rats, The Nulshie, etc. We thought we were grown up and knew the score, but he knew how to use younger guys and some of the older ones too.

Tottsie had spent years in Borstal where the strict regime had made him fit and strong. There he had been trained as a boxer, but he was also made street wise there and the two combined to make him much feared. Nowadays it would be considered foolish to take young kids and brutalise them but that is what Borstal did. Anyway Tottsie convinced us that if we robbed the woman who collected Billy's mum's weekly insurance payments we would be made. The fact that we never questioned this is proof of how gullible, and in fear of Tottsie we were.

Tottsie said that I was to run out at John Knox Street and Elgin Street corner, bump into the insurance woman and while she was distracted by me Billy was to grab her bag. Tottsie said he would stand in the Co-op doorway in John Knox Street in case anyone gave chase to Billy and me after we made the snatch.

We stood in place as the woman approached. I ran out, banged into the woman and as Billy ran forward he tripped and fell. The insurance woman picked Billy up, dusted him down and gave us a sweet each. Billy and I just looked at each other and we thanked the kindly insurance woman for the sweets. As

we walked along John Knox Street to tell Tottsie what had happened, I looked to where he was supposed to be waiting, but he was not there.

Billy and I carried on along John Knox Street wondering what had happened to Tottsie. As we crossed over the iron bridge into Whitecrook, he came out of the hedges saying: "did you get it?" We told him what had happened to Billy and he started shouting calling us "Fucking idiots". Declaring "I will never use any of you for a job again". I thought to myself, you are right Tottsie. Never again will you use me. Over the years he got many a young man into trouble, borstal or jail with his mad schemes.

Another occasion that Tottsie tried to use me was when the Bisley Boys had trouble with another gang from Partick, which is about 8 miles away in Glasgow. The two gangs had arranged to meet for a battle on a piece of waste land surrounded by tenements, but on the night that this was to take place we were told that word of the fight had got to the police and they were in the area waiting to pounce.

Tottsie and a man called Sparrow McColl from the Partick gang called a pow-wow and agreed to nominate one man from each gang to fight it out. Tottsie called for me to be the Bisley representative. I didn't fancy this one bit as I could have been fighting a professional boxer for all I knew so as word of this was being passed on to the gang members I dived into a close and started shouting at the top of my voice "police police".

Everyone scattered in all directions to avoid arrest and when they had gone I strolled out and got the bus home. When I met Tottsie later he was convinced that the police had in fact been seen by someone who had raised the alarm. I agreed that we were very lucky to have avoided arrest. Tottsie treated his gang like they were stupid and to some extent we were stupid to listen to him.

I got out of Clydebank soon after this and between the ages of fifteen and eighteen I travelled all over England working on building sites or taking whatever work was available. Endless towns, with a similar story in every one of them. Drink, women, hard work and wasting all the hard earned money with nothing

to show for it. I would come home periodically and at eighteen years of age I found myself back in Clydebank, just in time to be called up to do my National Service

Chapter 4

THE BRITISH ARMY

All of my older brothers had served in the armed forces and it seemed natural when I did too. John's Naval war-time service on destroyers, Willie's Army role in fighting the Japanese in the jungles of Burma, Peter's RAF service in Palestine in 1947 when he was shot in the neck by the Stern Gang, and Robert's stint in the TA Paratroops made my conscription in 1957 peacetime Britain tame by comparison. So I was to spend life between the ages of 19 and 22 in the British Army.

In 1959 when I was called up to the army to join the Royal Artillery Regiment I had high hopes that it would be the start of something new that would change me and make me a better person. I did not realise how much I would change and just how cynical I would become. With two years of National Service to be completed the entire experience soon became a game of them and us.

Years later I read a book, "The Virgin Soldiers". I remember laughing all the way through it as it reminded me so much of my time in Malaya. When I hear people say that National Service should be brought back I have to laugh as it did not make me a better person.

When I first arrived at the army camp at Oswestry we were marched day and night and told our army number (mine was 23630476). I never forgot it, because in order to get your army pay you had to march up to the Pay Officer, shout out your name, rank and number and if you could not remember it you were sent back to the end of the pay line of about 200 men. So you kept saying the number to yourself day and night until it was easier remembering your army number than it was remembering your name.

At the start of the army basic training I found myself with mostly Scottish boys and the Bombardiers, Sergeants who were in charge of our training, told us ‘Come on, boys, show these English pricks in the other troop what you Scots guys are made of.’ Needless to say they were telling the English lads the same shit. Life in the army is about men of 35 or 40 sending young boys of 18 years old to their deaths. Nothing much has changed. The death toll of young men continues to rise.

The hope of a new way of life faded quickly. We worked and trained hard and spent our pay getting drunk whenever you got some leave.

You met some really good pals in the army. You were in it together and you stuck together. It was us and them, and we often got our own back on them.

One night we were out on the town at Gravesend. The Scots, Irish, Scoucers and Geordies who I made pals with, got roaring drunk and kicked up hell. When we got back to the camp, we were stopped at the camp gate by a young officer that every boy hated. He was nicknamed, “The farmers boy” as his dad was a gentleman farmer. He was shouting at the Scots and Irish boys calling us savages.

He called out the guard to put us in the cells for the night. As he laid into us he looked down to see that one of the guys, a Romany Gypsy called Crabtree, was pissing against his leg and all over his highly polished boots. Well, the Farmer’s Boy took a fit lashing Crabtree with his pace stick, which was about 2ft long. He was shouting ‘you fucking animal’. He got Crabtree dragged into the guard-room forgetting the rest of us who just walked off to our billets making Crabtree our hero. No shouting or threats from Crabtree. This rebellious soldier took direct and decisive action, with his prick.

When our Regiment, 57 Heavy Ack-Ack, was breaking up there was a dance and party for us gunners. At our dance the Officers and NCOs could come, and did come. Some were drunk and swaggered about like they owned us. The following week it was the turn of the Officers and NCOs to have their Dinner Dance, to which we gunners were not invited. A group of us in-

cluding my mate Jimmy Devlin from Wine Alley in Govan tried to get in, but were refused admission and told if we persisted we would end up in the glasshouse. However we did manage to sneak into the dining room where the buffet had been set up. We helped ourselves to drinks, fags and the big fancy cake that said in icing letters: 'A Farewell to the Guns'. We took our spoils back to our billets and shared them with the rest of the gunners. I heard that when the Commanding Officer came to cut the cake, all hell broke loose, by which time we were all in our beds sleeping off our spoils.

After the break up of 57 Heavy Ack-Ack Regiment I was sent to Hobbs Barracks, between East Grinstead and Lingfield in Surrey. My new regiment being the 34 Light Ack-Ack. And so began another part of my army life. If you were the type of soldier who did not jump when they said jump, they put a Lance Corporal, who was also one of the army boxers to keep an eye on you. I'm afraid I don't respond to authority very well and was the type who found it hard to jump when I was told to.

The Lance Corporal assigned to me seemed to have one purpose, which was to follow me about screaming, "Alright, Gallagher, do this and do that. Ok, Gallagher, that's all the papers picked up now get over to the dining room and wash the dishes". All of my weapons training to become a dining room orderly. I did not fancy this one bit so after one hour I slipped on the floor, told the bombardier in charge that I could not wash the floors as my ankle was very painful.

If I was expecting any kind of sympathy, which I wasn't, then I was not disappointed. The Lance Corporal's screaming only seemed to intensify. "Ok, Gallagher, to the doctor and if you are faking you will be for the fucking high jump." I was taken to the doctor by a bombardier and whilst waiting for the doctor, I excused myself, retired to the toilet, removed my army boot and gave my ankle a good seeing to.

I was soon put in front of a morose doctor who had by his appearance been called away from some social event. He was obviously not too pleased at having to squeeze his white coat over his dinner suit. He gave me a perfunctory examination

and then a letter which stated that it did not need any brains to see that Gallagher's ankle was very badly swollen, to put me on light duties, and to try and not bother him again with symptoms a medical orderly was more than equipped to deal with. So I spent the next while sunning myself in the garden area picking up the odd bit of paper that blew in now and again.

John Willie McGowan, my Sergeant Major was a Scot like myself. Unlike me however, he was a good Scot of the Church of England. In other words, he licked the officers' arses and hated me with a vengeance. I had got into the habit of attending every church and church service on offer. I went to the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church, anything, to get away from playing the game of soldiers. One day he snarled at me, "What religion are you today Gallagher". I just smiled and said "Christian Sir".

Being a good Christian had its' spiritual benefits and my prayers were answered when God sent me an Angel to play with. My pal, Scouse Cullen and I, met two local girls. They would pick us up on their bikes and take us into town. They would stand and pedal while we sat on the bike seats. We would put our hands up their skirts as they cycled and grope their lovely legs at the top of their knickers. In the summer we cycled to the town swimming pool at night, swam naked with the girls and then made love on the grass beside the pool. This made the stay at Hobbs barracks bearable. All the shit during the day disappeared at night-time lying between those lovely legs.

Soon rumour was rife that we would be sent to Malaya and the activity around the camp did not belie this. Most of the guys were given three weeks embarkation leave. As I was just out of the guard-room Sergeant Major McGowan took great pleasure in informing me that I would only be getting one weeks leave.

I decided not to be in too much of a hurry to get back and after two weeks at home visited the doctor to tell him I had hurt my back moving my mothers' furniture. When I got back I was dragged by McGowan to the C O's office for failing to return in time. I explained to the CO that I had been unwell during my leave and had not been given the chance to explain this to the

Sergeant Major. I produced my doctor's sick line and instead of receiving any punishment was given three weeks pay. I was loaded.

The next ten days was spent getting the regiment ready to go to Malaya.

On the way to Malaya our troop ship HMT Nevasa stopped at Colombo, the capital of what was then Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. The locals there called us red-legs as we were not used to the sun when we were wearing our khaki uniform shorts. We thought we were world-wise but were taken in by a local who lured us to a place that was out-of-bounds. This guy invited us to an exhibition with the alluring words, "Johnny see donkey fuck woman". I think it was 10 rupees (75p), for this and about 20 of us after weeks at sea said, yes let's go. We followed the guy to a place where a scantily-clad woman came out of a shed along with a trestle made of wood. The guy gave us all a bottle of local beer and we were all excited, shouting for the donkey to do the woman who lay back over the trestle.

The guy put a washer on the donkey's dick saying the more money we threw into the ring, the more donkey dick the woman would take. So we threw in more rupees and when the washer reached about 18", and expectations were high, the place was raided by the MPs. The guy, the donkey and the woman disappeared into the bush along with the trestle table. A very slick operation, probably slicker than any our training could have pulled off. We ended the night being driven back to barracks in a one-ton lorry minus a fair bit of our hard earned cash.

When we got to Malaya it dawned on me what we were. Young soldiers who didn't have a clue about jungle warfare, or any other kind of warfare for that matter. All we knew was how to salute and do guard duty at the camp gate.

We needn't have worried though. Our Jungle training was about to begin. We were put into "Bashas", thatched billets with wooden frames and met our training sergeant, a man called Busby.

Sergeant Busby's main focus was being promoted to Sergeant Major and his attempts to achieve this goal gave our platoon a

fairly easy time of it. For example, as part of our jungle training we were given a map reference and our job was to reach it overnight and beat the other platoons to it. We left the camp and once we were well clear Sergeant Busby got us to stop a lorry by waving it down with our rifles. He then commandeered the lorry and ordered the lorry driver to drive us to a place near to the map reference. We then set up camp, got a good nights sleep and woke early the next day, strolling in to the checkpoint where the officers were anxious to see which platoon would arrive first. Obviously it was our platoon.

We then received the prize of beer and cigs that had been posted as an incentive. Jungle training! All I saw was cheating and lies by NCO's to get promotion or notch up their 22 years service. These guys could hardly walk, let alone fight. If real trouble had come along, we were untrained and led by fat bastards who had been living on cheap beer for twenty years or so.

Thank God we were never called to any major confrontation, as most of the fighting was over. One man did fire a shot in anger and that shot killed a pimp in a brothel in Singapore and because of this we had our live ammunition withdrawn. There was some unrest at this time and we were sent to patrol the streets to stop rioting and looting with empty rifles but with small hand-crank sirens that we were supposed to sound if there was trouble, at which point an officer would come running with ammo. Thankfully it never came to this as the siren had two handles—one at the bottom for holding and the crank for winding—and you wouldn't have been much good to stop rioting with both hands occupied, and your empty rifle wedged between your legs.

These were the sort of stupid situations that came up in the army and I used to think to myself it's no wonder the Japanese over-ran the British forces in the war of 1939-1945. Were the soldiers all too busy winding sirens to call for ammo? At the end of the day it was a fucking joke, a really bad joke.

I now think about all the stuff they told us of the British Army and the Victoria crosses that different regiments had won. Six,

before breakfast, and all that shit. What they didn't tell us was that in most cases we were fighting poor bloody natives armed with spears and shields made of hide. Whereas we, the British Army, had Gatling-guns, canons and rifles etc.

The first real shock the British Army got was in the First World War when we met our equals, the Germans. Millions of poor guys were slaughtered with the same half-wits who'd fought natives in the colonies in charge.

Of course it is wrong to generalise too much and there was one low-ranking officer, Sub Lt. John Smith, who was a good guy and tried to get as many of the men into shape as he could. He took us on ten-mile runs with packs on our backs. At first the only two who finished the runs were Smith and myself, so he kind of took a shine to me.

As it was my job to drive the AEC Matador 10-ton trucks that towed the Ack Ack guns, Smith got me a job driving his Land Rover and made me the stick man, 'Best Dressed Soldier on Guard Duty' that is. I think he knew that I was put on guard duty many times because of my past record, and I still am very grateful to him for making my life a wee bit better. If Sub Lt. John Smith ever reads this story, he will know that I am glad he came to my regiment in Singapore.

Our main enemy in Malaysia was not the Red Communist guerrillas but the Red Caps, or Military Police (MPs). When you were on Boogie Street in the Red Light district you had to keep your wits about you. As you were perusing what was on offer to satisfy the needs of the young soldier (It was 7 shillings and six pence old money for a woman, that's about 32p), we would hear someone shout: "MPs". There then followed a mad exodus all running away from the MPs. The local stall holders would pull their barrows out of our way, then when the MPs came charging down the street, the stall holders and locals in general would walk in front of the MPs.

Guys with the stalls on wheels would crash into running MPs and bash against the Land Rovers. It was a good laugh with the MPs shouting at the locals who would say 'No understand'. So at least we had something in common with the locals.

I had many a good night in the red light district of Boogie Street. Sometimes, mind you I got it wrong. As one night I picked up a wee darling and I was kissing her in the street, with my friends shouting to me ‘good on you, Jock.’ I felt like “Jack the Lad” till it came the time to put my hand inside the girl’s pants. What was hanging there but the last turkey in the shop, a wee willy. There was no way I could keep that quiet and soon I became the laughing stock.

I did not see much trouble in my time in Malaya when I was based mostly in Singapore with spells in Penang and Ipoh. I really don’t know if it was life in the British army that turned me on the road to alcohol, but when I was demobbed the first thing I did was to drink all the army pay I had. Not that it was much. I had come back from Malaya on the last British Army troop ship, HMT Oxfordshire, through the Suez Canal before it closed, then on to the Mediterranean Sea and back via Gibraltar to Southampton.

Most of the time spent at sea I was in a drunken stupor, full of Tiger beer that we had bought cheaply in Malaya. I spent my time coming home either lying on the deck in the sun sleeping, or else drinking. When I got home to the UK, I had a lovely tan and went to Woolwich Barracks to get discharged from the army. A group of NCO’s said to us, “Just because you are back from Malaya don’t think you know it all”. And I thought to myself. “You fucking pricks, what I know is the shit and fucking lies that the army pedalled to us.

The army makes you cynical. For instance I had picked up a bad ear infection in the army which was nick-named “Singapore Ear” and was very painful, but the treatment was even worse. I was given high pressure water jetting by medical orderlies in the Nee Soon Garrison Singapore which was so painful, that in an attempt to get relief, I tried to knock myself out by banging my head off a wall. An Ear Specialist Surgeon in the Alexandra Hospital, the British Military Hospital in Singapore later said “what fools have been treating this man’s ear”?

But while my ear complaint was serious and recognised as such while I was in the army when I was demobbed and

25-years later tried to get compensation for the deafness this mistreatment had caused, the army fought the case all the way to the Army Court in Edinburgh. It seemed as if by some miracle there was nothing wrong with my ears or hearing now. Yet I am still deaf in one ear and cannot put my head under water to this day.

My captain in Malaya was a Captain Stevenson, who came from Glasgow, although you would never have thought it. He was very upper class and said he didn't understand a word I said. He told me that I was a "social misfit" because I always questioned anything I didn't understand or agree with. One day I said to him that I couldn't understand how the enemy could be terrorists when it was their country. He studied me with contempt, for a while before saying in his upper-class drawl, "Never you mind trying to think Gallagher, I'll do that for you".

But you do think. You think a lot. I think about how we once had Irish terrorists, Kenyan terrorists, Malayan ones, Cypriots, Yemeni. All sorts of terrorists, yet now these same people, who we locked up are running their own countries. So maybe we were the fucking terrorists. We managed to give Singapore to the Chinese people, Brunei to a Sultan whose oilfields made him one of the richest men in the world. Good friend of the Queen he was. We know what armies are for, taking land and wealth off people abroad who own it. The army taught us that these foreign people were Wogs, Chinks, etc, and were less than worthless, and so Britain had to look after them. I didn't like the shit I was taught, looking back, it made me uncomfortable and I was glad to get out.

I was watching the television news not so long ago and Bush and Blair were talking about how we had brought Democracy to Iraq. 4,000,000 Iraqis displaced and up to 1,000,000 killed. How many women and kids I wonder? Yet a country not too far from Iraq's oil fields called Azerbaijan has an American air base there for troop deployment. In Azerbaijan opposition party members regularly go missing and there are no human rights whatsoever. Do we not need to bring democracy there? But then, their President is a good friend to Bush and the USA.

Or what about Uzbekistan, another country near Afghanistan where the local police tortured human rights activists by boiling them in water? Craig Murray our Ambassador there protested about this and Blair sacked him in 2004. The hypocrisy of these people makes me sick.



*HMT Oxfordshire, last troopship through
Suez Canal before it closed.*



In tropical gear.



Drinking Tiger beer in Singapore



Outside Bashas, Nee Soon Barracks Singapore.



Me (white shirt) surveying truck stuck in ditch on field exercise

Nee Soon Barracks in rear.



Relaxing at Barracks

How the army sell themselves.





*Me far right after
six hours in swel-
tering heat digging
out my truck.*

Hand held siren.



*My truck and Ack Ack gun after
dig out.*

Chapter 5

MY DRUNKEN YEARS 1961 TO 1970

When I completed my National Service and left the army aged twenty two I was a big strong man, well able to take care of myself, but the army had troubled me and left me cynical. My mother, sister Margaret, and brother Robert had gone to live in the USA (where mother had a brother) about the time I was starting my national service. They wanted me to join them but I didn't fancy it and with nothing to keep me in Clydebank I spent the first two years after demob in London working at Whitbread's brewery.

We made the beer and we also drank it. It was hard work at Whitbread's in 1961. After the cloudy beer had been drained from the huge tanks for filtering, the hops and grain which had absorbed hot water from the beer-making process had formed a "mash", which then had to be shovelled out of the mash tun vessels. These tanks were huge and there were several tons of grain residue that had to be removed from each tank after the fermentation process.

The atmosphere inside the tanks was hot and damp and when you shovelled the sweat just poured out of you. The faster you were though, the longer you had to drink and get paid for it. On the nightshift if you finished at 3 o'clock in the morning it left you four hours to drink the beer.

We took the cloudy beer from these tanks where it fermented, put a cloth over a bin, and poured the new beer through the cloth into the bin slowly to give us clear beer to drink. This new beer was very strong and by seven in the morning, clocking out time, we were well on the way to being drunk for the rest of the day. Even then we would go straight from work to Smithfield Market where the pubs opened early for the market workers.

After about two hours in the early pubs, I would get the bus home to my flat in Hackney Wick, have something to eat, and

then go to a nearby park and sleep until about seven at night. I would then go back to the flat for tea and get ready to start my shift at ten o'clock. This became the cycle of my life for two years.

I had many friends at Whitbreads, most of them hard working and hard drinking just like myself. This drunken work cycle was brought to an abrupt end when I was hung over one day and decided to have a kip, leaving my workmate an Irish guy called Tony Bannon to let the new beer into the fresh tanks. The only problem was that we had forgotten to clean the tanks beforehand, and they contained caustic soda, which completely ruined the new beer.

When we started our shift the next night Tony and I were sent for and taken in front of the day shift boss who had been waiting on us coming in. The shop steward, a guy called Jock Glen, was also sent for. We had no excuse really. Jock Glen, the shop steward, told the boss what good workers we were and he, being a Scot like myself, spouted all the bullshit about how I had come back from Malaya and was trying to find roots etc.

The boss listened for a long time, but while he accepted Jock's pleas that we were good workers, the fact remained that at the end of the day beer worth £2,000 (a lot of money in 1962) had been ruined by our negligence. He said he had no other way of dealing with what had happened but to sack us both. We got our money, said goodbye to the rest of the guys at Whitbreads and we were on our way.

About this time in the Kings Cross area of London I met Conchy, my old friend and fellow Bisley Boy from Clydebank. Conchy could drank bottles of wine non-stop and though very drunk appeared to be sober and didn't stagger, but his mind was mad drunk. When he headed off to work on the building sites around London he was invariably drunk. He was pissed as he got through the day and after tea would buy more wine and carry on drinking until the wee small hours of the morning.

Conchy could get really mad when he was drunk. He would sometimes just jump up without warning and disappear out of the sky light of our attic room, climbing over roofs around

where we lived, and come back hours later with money and other goods he had burgled.

One particular morning we awoke from a party we had hosted the night before to find that Conchy had finished everything. He had drunk every bottle of wine, beer and spirits that had been left. He was in a foul mood because his boss had paid him off for being drunk and he was calling him all the English bastards of the day. He ran into the street cursing the English and banging on random doors with a pair of pliers. He was hammering on one door when the glass shattered. A policeman came running across to us and asked what was going on.

Conchy was of no help, so I told the cop we had been to a party in this house, and that my friend was a bit drunk and had accidentally slammed the door, breaking the glass. I was thinking that my story was sounding quite plausible when a Greek guy opened the door and tried to complain to the cop about the broken window. He had no English and the young copper asked me if I knew what he was saying. I told the cop he was saying that the window must be paid for. I then turned to the Greek and spoke some mumbo jumbo to him, telling the policeman that I had said we would pay for the window on Friday after work. The cop seemed happy with this and let us on our way. The Greek guy was still confused and gesturing to the young cop as I put Conchy on a bus and left him to it. I went to work knowing I would see him some time soon.

London was a big and lonely place. Millions of people from all over God's earth lived there, but nobody seemed to know anyone. A lot of the new foreign arrivals couldn't speak English and if they did speak a little it was apparent that it was not their first language. With signs however, and speaking slowly, I found that you can get by no matter your accent, or where you come from.

Conchy lived in a room at Kings Cross and across the landing was a wee guy Vince, who we called Yorky; he was a gambler who never worked and another big guy, a German. This German hardly ever got out of his bed, wore only underpants with about five belts on to hold them up. The only English he

could say was “You Scotlanders are electric”. We all drank like maniacs and sometimes we never left Conchy’s room. The room was to become the scene of some bizarre, boozy and even one very violent session.

Once, having spent all our money and being very hung-over all four of us were feeling low and in need of a good drink. The other three left their rooms and went downstairs to look for something to eat while I stayed in my room. While they were out I broke into all three’s electric meters. I then went downstairs and much to their surprise and delight I offered to take them out for a drink. They followed me out of the door without a backward glance.

In the pub I told Yorkie on the quiet that we were drinking the German’s meter money. I then told the German we were drinking Conchie’s money and then told Conchie we were drinking Yorkie’s meter money. They were all in great humour as they got fired into the drink thinking they were drinking on money robbed from other people’s electric meters. I was in great humour knowing that I was the only one drinking for nothing. We would do almost anything for money for drink.

On another day while taking the bus home, I met an English girl called Tina. We got talking and I invited her back to my room. I bought some drinks, we made love, got drunk and Tina stayed the night. The following day, I got more bottles of wine and took Tina to meet Conchy. Eventually all three of us along with Yorky ended up in the big German’s room, all of us enjoying a drink and a game of cards. “Strip Jack Naked”. We were cheating obviously and Tina soon ended up with no clothes on. Eventually the other three were also naked and as I had spent my energies on Tina the day before, I left, leaving them to get to know each other better.

The following day when I arrived at Conchy’s place the landlady informed me that all four of them had been taken to hospital. The police and an ambulance had been called and there was blood all over the room.

I found out a few days later what had happened. Conchy had been making love to Tina being spurred on by the German guy

shouting “you Scotlanders are electric”. All seemed happy until Conchy noticed the big German hiding bottles of wine under his bed. Conchy got up and hit the German guy over the head with a cider bottle knocking him out completely.

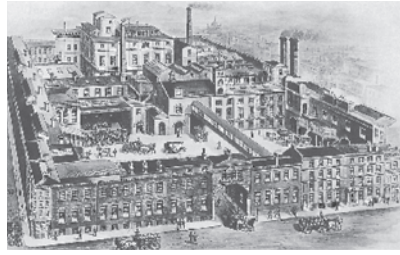
When Conchy turned round, Yorky was in bed making love to Tina. He dragged Yorky off and resumed from where he had left off. Yorky then decide to stick the broken cider bottle into Conchy’s leg. Conchy then grabbed the same cider bottle and ran it down Yorky’s back. When the ambulance arrived the police decided that the crew should take the girl for treatment first as she was unconscious and covered from head to toe in blood. When the ambulance got to the hospital, they discovered that Tina had nothing wrong with her, except she had passed out from too much drink and had the blood of her three lovers all over her.

Another slightly more humorous event that made me think it might be time to set off for home happened, not surprisingly in a pub. I noticed that there was a guy staring at Conchy. I mentioned this to him and he said, “You’d be staring too If I was wearing your suit”. This guy’s wife had been the cleaner at Cochy’s lodgings. Conchy had been having a fling with her and she had given him one of her husband’s suits as a token of appreciation for services rendered.

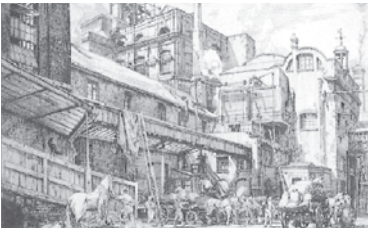
Unfortunately for Conchy, although he was a big lad (6’ 2”), he couldn’t see very well and it wasn’t unknown for this same guy to approach him in the street and punch him in the face. It had happened a few times. He just punched him and ran away. Conchy would shout after him: “I’ll get you ya bastard”. He meant it, but was too blind to do anything about it happening again. I left the short-sighted Conchy and London in 1962 and came back to live in Clydebank.



*South Yard Whitbread's
brewery London 1792*



*Whitbread's brewery Chiswell St,
London Circa 1900*



*View of the Malt Tower Circa
1915*



*Whitbread & Company Fire
Brigade 1931*



*Whitbread's brewery
Chiswell Street 1960*



*The Brewery 2007, now a
function room.*

Whitbread's have a long and proud tradition of brewing beer in London, which survived the blitz and other catastrophes, but nearly fell victim to the combined efforts of Sid Gallagher and Tony Bannon.

Chapter 6

BACK HOME AND MARRIED (1962)

My lifestyle didn't change that drastically when I returned to Clydebank. I stayed with an old school mate and his brother, Andy and Billy Benham. We worked and drank. There was plenty of work about and if you got paid-off from one job it was easy to get another. We worked digging ditches for the Electricity Board, laying cables all over Scotland, and we also worked for the Gas Board doing similar hard work.

One job I worked on was in Cambuslang where there was a gang of us from Clydebank including a mate of mine called Jocky McKinlay. Jocky myself and another ten guys got our pay one Thursday and we all went into the Cunard Bar in Clydebank to open our pay packets. All twelve of us were dressed in the same gear, same overalls, same boots, same donkey jackets, same hard hats all with the company logo as supplied by the company. As the night wore on we got drunk and trouble flared up and to cut a long story short our dirty dozen wrecked the place and were arrested and locked up.

We were in the holding cells at the police station when the sergeant said that we were to present ourselves for identification by the bar manager and other witnesses. But Jocky objected to this and said that for each of our twelve the police would have to provide an identity parade with twelve men attired in the same uniform clothing that we had. Of course the police could not come up with 144 men of similar appearance to us, all kitted out with hard hats, overalls, donkey jackets etc and we were released without charge.

One of the jobs that I got was working on the Loch Awe tunnel. I hitched up to Oban with another guy, John Kelly. With our first lift a lorry driver dropped us at the Dunoon turn off. We were feeling quite hungry so Kelly said, "let's gets some

food down us". It was then I discovered that I had left the food bag on the truck. The next car driver that passed could not believe it when he saw two men were fighting half way up the "Rest and Be Thankful", a remote Highland viewing, picnic, and beauty spot. The driver stopped though and took us all the way to the Loch Awe tunnel. Loch Awe was hard work. Seven 14 hour shifts to clear £37 per week, but this was pretty good money in 1962.

I met my wife Joyce while I lived with the Benhams. I remember she was the best looking girl on John Knox Street where we lived. Joyce and I went out together for about a year before we got married in 1963 and she was more than a match for me. When we fell out, which was usually my fault, she never wasted time arguing with me. She would just pack her bags and leave and I would end up begging her to come back.

After our wedding ceremony in the Registry Office (we got married a year later in the RC church as Joyce was an RC) we had a party in the Benham's house. This party was not planned as there were no invitations sent out for guests to attend a reception. It happened spontaneously when people heard that there was drink being taken at the Benham's and they simply invited themselves; and of course they were welcome.

The house was packed out and Billy Benham had made sure my room was clean and had fresh sheets on the wedding bed. A make shift bar, with a wide variety of drinks was set up in the corner of the living room. The crowd got drunker as the night wore on, but there was no trouble. Later, near the end of the night, Joyce and I moved away slowly to go into our room. There were bodies lying in the hall and wee Jack Spot, a local character, was pissing on the wallpaper. He said, 'It's the best party I have ever been to'. He did not know if it was a birthday, wedding or a funeral, and he did not care.

When we got to my room however, there was a couple asleep in our bed. Eventually we got them out and prepared for our wedding night, only to discover that one of them had pissed the bed. Good luck Sid and Joyce.

When you are young and get married you don't think that you need to change the way you live your life. I thought that as long as I handed over a fair bit of money, I could do as I liked. Andy Benham came to live with Joyce and me, but it didn't work out. Joyce and Andy never saw eye to eye. Andy was a good looking guy with blonde wavy hair and always had women after him. But he was also a cheat and a liar.

He never offered to give Joyce any money for his digs and I never really thought of asking him for any as I had plenty of work in those days. Joyce got up out of bed one night and caught Andy taking a girl into his room. She said to him 'what do you think this is' to which Andy replied 'what do you mean, it's not your house. It's Sid's house.' That was him out.

Eventually Joyce and I moved to a house in "The View" as it was called, a scheme consisting of about 30 entries, or closes, leading to two-storey tenements. There was a toilet on each landing and there were continual bouts of drinking and fighting. Women would be seen running along the back courts being chased by their drunk husbands and there were parties in the streets just about every weekend. All this seemed normal and you accepted it as though that was what life was all about. You just got on with it. You thought you would be living down "The View" for the rest of your life and it didn't seem so bad at the time.

It was around this time that I became involved with Tottsie Pollock again. Tottsie as I have said was a "hard man" a real psycho. He used violence against his own gang to keep them in line. He was also known for knocking guys out with just one punch, his first one. There was a story that followed him around about a welder he had punched in a bookies. Tottsie gave him a real knock-out punch, but the welder never went down as was expected and nobody could believe it. So he punched the guy again, still to no effect. Tottsie started to rain blows into the guy thinking he had maybe lost his touch. It turned out that the guy was unconscious after all, but couldn't fall as his thick pig-skin welding jacket was caught on the pay-out window.

When I met up with him again Tottsie was running a protection racket with the local pubs, bookies and scrap merchants as his clientele. They were all fair game as far as we were concerned. It looked to us as though they robbed everyone else so why shouldn't we get our share from them.

Tottsie would go into a pub for a "cairy-oot". Drink on credit, which was never paid back. If the bar manager refused him, Tottsie would tell him to look outside where a crowd of us would be standing with bricks in our hands. The landlord knew that his windows would be smashed well before the police could arrive and that he would lose his customers. They always gave us the carry-out and we never saw any of them go bust.

The same tactic was used on the bookmaker's shops, and the money they gave Tottsie for us not to smash their windows was spent on drink. I knew though, that Tottsie was also on a regular "protection" wage from them.

We extorted money from those we thought had plenty, and I remember one lovely summer's day we were drinking down Rothesay Dock (our favourite drinking place). We had read a story somewhere about Arabian sheiks getting their weight in gold from their subjects on their birthday. It was Tottsie's birthday and as we got drunker and drunker, we got this great idea. We all set of to Nutty McDermot's scrap yard. We put Tottsie on to the scales and made Nutty pay him his weight in copper.

There were times when we saw a more sinister side to Tottsie. Once three of us had gone to Carlisle and met a couple of girls who took us home. We were sitting with the girls on our knee and Tottsie seemed made up with their mother.

Tottsie always made sure he got a woman. If he wasn't fixed up, then nobody was. A knock came to the door and a neighbour, Bob, joined us. The mother was obviously really pleased to see him, and you could see Tottsie's face changing to one of rage. He drank some more vodka, then out of the blue he says "right, cow, get me a cup of tea." Bob the neighbour intervened on the mum's behalf and Tottsie grabbed him and thrust his head in the coal fire. Bob's hair was blazing and we all had to get the hell out of it.

For those who have never met a real psychopath it is hard to describe the terror they can engender. The menace Tottsie generated was electric and in his case it was allied to a punch that could knock down a horse. All this and he didn't have one ounce of decency or remorse. He was a law unto himself and the police, like the rest of us were wary of him.

But Tottsie wasn't the hardest man in the Glasgow area, that title was held by a legend of a man who we will just call "The Man". The Man didn't take liberties by picking on people he knew he could beat as Tottsie did, and in fact would go out of his way to beat up bullies, only using his fists.

Tottsie made the mistake of giving one of The Man's mates a hiding and The Man came to Clydebank looking for revenge. The two met on the street in Clydebank and The Man gave Tottsie a hiding which only ended with Tottsie begging him to stop. This scene was witnessed by a few people leaning out of their tenement windows in John Knox Street including my wife Joyce. While most were too fearful of Tottsie to tell the tale my Joyce told it to anyone who would listen.

When word got back to Tottsie he went to my house where Joyce answered the door. "I'm going to break your jaw you fucking loud-mouthed cow" said Tottsie but Joyce simply pointed to her jaw and then to her uncle and her sister standing with her and said "there it is and there's my witnesses". Tottsie realised if he hit Joyce he would do time in jail so then said he would take it out on her "big stupid husband"—me.

I was unaware of what had happened with Joyce and Tottsie and was returning to a table in the Yoker JFC Club with a pint of beer in one hand and a glass of whiskey in the other when Tottsie burst in his face contorted in rage. I instinctively placed my drinks in his shaking outstretched hands, saying "there you go Tottsie", and went back to the bar for a replenishment for myself.

My automatic gesture of generosity saved me from a hammering, as the alcoholic Tottsie was in need of a drink and after muttering a few obscenities about my wife he forgot it as he got drunker. I sensed it was not a time for me to be too close to

Tottsie and slipped into the background and let some other Bisle Boy pay for Tottsie's humiliation at the hands of The Man. When I later found out what had happened that night at Joyce's door I realised how lucky I was to be in one piece.

It was rumoured that by nine in the evening Tottsie knew which member of the gang drinking with him was going to get a good hammering, or at least a hard punch and a sore face when the pub closed at ten. This was his way of keeping us in order and we were only relieved when it was not us and was some other poor sod's turn.

Stories like the Carlisle coal fire incident quickly spread and added to his fearsome reputation and it wasn't long before we heard that a gang from Glasgow wanted to meet with Tottsie to discuss some kind of a gang alliance. These were seriously bad guys every bit as bad as himself and Tottsie—who was no fool—was shitting himself thinking of what they would get him involved in, and the long jail terms that were likely to be associated with their activities.

At this time these Glasgow guys were shooting at each other in the streets in broad daylight. One of them was known as "The Devil" who nobody liked, but everybody feared. Once The Devil was arguing with a good friend in a house in Glasgow and he said to his friend: "we are mates, why are we arguing like this, lets go outside for a smoke and cool off" once outside without warning he turned on his friend and slashed his face to ribbons.

When The Devil died only his father and the grave diggers were present at his funeral. The funeral reception could have been held in a phone box such was his unpopularity.

With these events in mind I decided at about this time that I should think about going away to work in England again. I used to go away myself when I got into debt, or when I hadn't paid the rent for months on end. I was planning to head off on the Friday when someone told me that Tottsie was considering going with me. He had decided to get out before the Glasgow mob came to befriend him. There was no way I wanted to be in England with him so I left on the Thursday night. On the Friday

Tottsie went to my wife's door and Joyce told him I had left the day before. He was furious and wanted to kill me—again.

If Tottsie was bad, what was worse were some of the members of his family and his in-laws. They got off with murder threatening guys they would never normally have dared to. They always had the spectre of Tottsie to back them up. When Tottsie died there was a day of reckoning and a few of them got a good doing. Towards the end he had got involved in money lending. He was caught threatening a woman and kicking her door down. When it went to court he was sentenced to seven years of which he served three and a half. He hit the bottle hard when he got out, took a stroke and died not long after.

My friend John McGinley and I were highly amused after Tottsie died because all of a sudden people started telling tall tales of how they had faced him down or beat him in a fight. What was so funny was that John and I were the only ones we knew of who had answered him back, and we paid for it with a hammering.

Unlike the rest of us Tottsie didn't have much of a sense of humour, but I did, and one of the funniest incidents I saw was when I was working on the building of the M6 motorway near Birmingham. My workmate then was a Clydebank guy called Gibby (Gilbert Divers) he was mad as a brush but a good friend to me. He used to get long prison sentences for violence. Anyway Gibby was living in a single room with only a bed. We were working away as usual getting paid on a Thursday: eating and drinking till the money ran out, usually by the Saturday. Then we had no money, no food until the Thursday again. So Gibby said he was sick of this and he was going to get proper digs where every morning he could get a breakfast and sandwiches for work.

The first house Gibby tried, he knocks on the door and asks the landlady for digs, but she says: "can't you read the notice, No Coloured No Irish." So Gibby tells her he is not Irish, but comes from Scotland and when the landlady says "whereabouts?" Gibby—very careful not to mention Glasgow—says "from Clydebank, a wee country town beyond Loch Lomond".

So the woman was happy, he got digs, and it was Jock this and Jock that, and he is calling her mam and everything is fine until the first pay-day when Gibby gets home at 1.30 am steaming drunk. When he can't get anything to watch on the TV (programmes shut down at about 11 pm in those days) he throws the set through the skylight of his attic room onto the street below.

There was a near riot in the street below and the police were called; Gibby was arrested and later jailed. The next time we passed his digs there was a notice saying "No Scots, No Coloured, No Irish."

Another funny incident happened when a bunch of us were working on the M6. We were then in digs at Leicester and with us was Robert "Poochy" Pollock. Poochy was Tottsie's old man and he was a bad character in his own right, but like many more who were related to Tottsie he hid behind his reputation. Poochy didn't like work much and was in and out of prison quite a lot. The neighbours in Clydebank got up petitions at various times to get him out of the district.

Anyway Poochy and another Clydebank character Pat McDade were keeping house for us when we were at work. This should have entailed them buying food and cooking it for us coming home, but mostly consisted of them buying wine instead of food and drinking it all day so that by the time we came home they were usually pretty pissed and there was little if anything in the way of dinner.

Anyway one evening after dinner we were all watching a drama about Mary Queen of Scots, and as the Queen's troubles with the English Queen were acted out ending in her being beheaded the mood of the two housekeepers, Poochy and Pat deteriorated. By this time steaming drunk, they cursed the English for all they had done to our Scots queen, and this outpouring of anti-English racism went outside the room as the two patriots started abusing passers by and then throwing bottles at our neighbour's windows and doors.

When the police inevitably came we sat back and enjoyed scenes that were like something from the Keystone Cops as

Poochy punched a policeman, then he and Pat ran through the front of the house and out the back door with the police in hot pursuit. Minutes later, having given the cops the slip, the pair came running through the back door and out the front again, followed in minutes by the police, who had called for reinforcements.

We were by now howling with laughter as we watched this farce. The by now large police presence in the area eventually paid off, and the pair were run down and handcuffed. When the police took statements to find out what had caused this outburst of riotous conduct, Poochy the patriot said they did it because of what the English had done to our Queen of Scots. "But that was 500 years ago said the police sergeant", "aye but we just found out about it tonight on the telly" said the bold Pooch. Poochy and Pat got three months apiece to read up on their history.

Another funny incident happened back home when Gibby was in jail for assault and his father died in Clydebank. Gibby's mother then took a lover, who was the local money lender, a thirty-stone lump known as "The Pig". With Gibby's release imminent The Pig came into the local pub and bought a few rounds of drinks to soften us up, then asks my pal John McGinley what our mate Gibby is like. John tells the truth; that he is a good guy, but he is also a bit mad. So The Pig says he will just have to have a poker up his jacket sleeve for protection when Gibby gets out.

The next day The Pig is sitting next to the fire in Gibby's house when Gibby gets home. The Pig gets up and extends his hand saying "Hello Gilbert, I am a friend of your mother's", but Gibby goes mad and says "that's my dad's chair your sitting in" then pulls the TV set off the stand and hits The Pig over the head with it. The Pig bolts for the door with Gibby in hot pursuit punching The Pig on the back of the head as The Pig runs like a marathon runner down the street.

A 17" television set seemed to be Gibby's weapon of choice, black & white or colour would do, as long as it was heavy.

The one thing that went hand in hand with violence was drink. Most guys were good hard working people and didn't get into trouble until they took drink. There were some exceptions like Tottsie but most of my mates were decent until they took drink and I was becoming more aware of this.

In 1971 aged 32 I stopped drinking. I did so after I had a job in construction at a whisky bond in Dalmuir. There we were always able to get a few bottles for ourselves every day and at night we would drink until we blacked out. Then I was put in charge of the dumper truck that took the rubbish outside the Bond gates to the rubbish skips. Soon I was driving a five gallon drum of white whisky out of the gates hidden under the rubbish. I would do this twice a day. At night time we would put the whisky mixed with a third coke into lemonade bottles and sell them at £2 a bottle in Clydebank.

The mixture was lethal. I was getting blackouts more and more. I was also getting some terrible beatings and doing terrible things, breaking windows etc. that I couldn't even remember. It was like a nightmare. Then I woke up one morning and thought fuck this. I'm getting out.

Chapter 7

ON THE ROAD AGAIN— THE INDUSTRIAL VAGABOND

In September 1971, I arrived back in London. I had left a mountain of debt for Joyce to face and she was at her wits' end trying to pay the rent and feed and clothe two young children. I had only twenty five pence in my pocket. No job and no digs. I felt as if it was the end of the end. I turned to my companion, an older guy called Matt Bannantine, and told him I was never going to touch drink in my life again. Since then I never have.

We found digs for five pounds a week with an old lady. She was willing to wait until we were paid. We got jobs as joiners by telephone and got to the job site by skipping our fares. At the building site I got a hold of an old dumper truck. It had no plates and was only supposed to be driven on the site. With Matt's help I filled it with lead sheeting and drove it through the streets of East Acton to a scrap yard where I got £87 for it. I could now start my new life. It was still a struggle, but a struggle without drink.

Even though I had stopped drinking I still went into the pub with Matt. One night we met an Irishman and he got sentimental, as with a tear in his eye he told me his wife had moved on. I said I was sorry to hear that his wife had died. "No she's not dead Jock said Paddy", she told me "it's either the Guinness or me, and I had to let her go Jock".

Matt would get drunk every night. He would also threaten to kill me whenever I went to sleep every night! "When you shut your eyes tonight you're dead you bastard" were his goodnight words to me. Matt was a decent guy without drink but alcohol doesn't improve any of us and he was a pain when he was pissed.

Matt never kept his promise and I lived to see the daylight and after a while in London saw an advertisement for joiners in Antwerp, so we headed for Belgium. I was very surprised at the building techniques being employed on the site. I felt that the scaffolding/shuttering didn't seem adequate for the loads it had to bear.

Matt left for Scotland suddenly so I promised to post his wages on to him and I worked on for a while, eventually deciding to go home as well because there was no real difference in the Belgian and British wages. When I was back in London watching the news on television I saw the bank building I had been working on the previous Friday in Antwerp had collapsed. Some men had died so I was fortunate not to be there. A lucky start to my new life in the UK.

The first thing I did when I got back to Scotland was look Matt up. I arrived at his door but he was less than welcoming saying "some fucking mate you are". I followed him in to his house and he said "the wages you were to send me never came". I told him I had sent them registered mail and while he went to the toilet I searched my wallet for proof of posting. I found it, but his wife who was watching said, "don't show him that, I done the wages in". When Matt came back I handed him the proof of posting and turned to leave telling him to take it up with the Post Office. As I left the house I heard Matt's wife's screams behind me.

Coming back to Scotland after two years away, drink free and feeling good I got a job as a crane driver in Sir Robert McAlpine's Ardyne Point Construction Yard, just south of Dunoon. There was only one snag with me getting this job and it was the fact that I didn't have a clue how to operate a crane. The yard was building massive concrete oil rigs in a huge hole in the ground and there were 6 tower cranes on the job and each crane had to be operated by a driver with the aid of a banksman, whose job it was to stand in a clear position on the structure and give hand signals to the crane operator who was in an elevated cabin on the crane, and often could not see the load his crane carried.

I had bluffed my way into a job I couldn't do but Rab Rutherford a mate of mine was working on the site as crane driver and he helped me until I got the hang of it. I did the banksman for the first 4 hours of my shift and when it was my turn for 4 hours on the crane, Rab came up with me instead of going for his meal and showed me the ropes. I was glad of his help till I mastered the controls.

There were three of us crane drivers to each tower crane. We worked on a 12 hour shift, each man working 4 hours banksman, four hours crane driver and four hours for meals. After a while our team of Rab, myself and another guy from East Kilbride got cocky and made an agreement between ourselves that two men stayed on the rigs doing 6 hours banking and 6 hours on the crane, taking sandwiches and a flask up to the crane cabin. This meant that every third day one of us clocked in, but instead of working could go home or do as you pleased for the day.

This was a great scam until one day on his free day Rab got drunk and was involved in a car crash in Dunoon. McAlpine's bosses wanted to know how he could be involved in a car crash when he should have been operating a crane on the rig. Myself and the other guy said his wife had come to Dunoon to see him and we had covered for him. We got off with this excuse as there were no crane drivers spare to replace us, but our scam was over and we now had to clock on in the morning at the rig.

Once complete the massive rig (the biggest portable structure in the world at the time weighing 300,000 tons) was towed by five tugs to Tarbert on Loch Fyne for deep water tests. For us on the cranes this involved working a straight seven days a week on twelve hour shifts.

The herring fishing fleet was in the port of Tarbert, and this was always a good time. There was a ceilidh in town, dancing till the wee small hours of the morning, much drink and a few fights. This happened every week and people came from a 30 mile radius, as far as Campbeltown for the fun. Tarbert, Loch Fyne, was jumping yet the town on the other side of the loch was sleeping. Tignabrouaich always reminded me of a movie

called Brigadoon, the town that slept and only came to life every 100 years.

While the rig was in the deep water of Loch Fyne, off Tarbert I sat about 500 feet above sea level in the crane cab, and it was my job to lift the shore-based workmen on and off the rig. This involved lowering them to sea level for the boat going ashore in a man-carrying basket at a steady controlled speed.

The process was repeated in reverse when men were coming onboard the rig from boats. One day an English gaffer called Bill Lever, a big fat guy who took no nonsense came on the radio demanding to be taken down to the boats. I don't take orders from those in authority easily and told him to wait till the basket was full as other men were going ashore as well as him. He barked "take me down now". I replied "O'K Bill, now repeat after me, Our Father Who Art in Heaven" and took the crane out of gear and just let the basket plummet down in free-fall at great speed. It hurtled down until I stopped it suddenly on the brakes about six foot from the sea. The sudden breaking caused the basket to bounce up and down for a few minutes before it settled down. Luckily for me Bill had a good grip and saw the funny side and we became good friends.

From Tarbert I went to Kishorn to help build more oil and gas rigs for the North Sea. This involved working a 14-hour day in all weathers. The lesson I got from life in Kishorn was to think of others. A young guy called Sheridan was killed when a ladder he was on, going up to the crane gave way, and the poor young man fell to his death. The conditions at Kishorn were among the worst I have ever worked under, and the men were some of the roughest you could meet.

When young Sheridan was killed however, every man gave a clocking-in bonus called "slip money" for his family. This money was a bonus of £32 to make sure every one clocked in, in the morning. The sum collected worked out at £35,000 for the lad's mother, which she had in her purse even before the insurance company got involved. Charlie Fergus, who was a rough Paddy and half-owner of Fergus Hayes, the company

that Sheridan worked for doubled the men's payment giving the mother £70,000. Good on them all.

My next stop was Shetland. I headed there with two of the guys from Kishorn, Charlie Bradley from Greenock and Bruce Milan from Aberdeen. After getting to the Shetlands we got a lift, 25 miles to the construction site for the Sullom Voe oil base. Two guys that owned Terrapin, the construction company that was building the camp for the workers, asked how we'd got there, and if we'd filled in a job form on mainland Scotland, as we were supposed to. We told them we only heard there was a job here and had come on spec. They told us we'd have to come back in the morning, but we would get a start.

We headed back to Lerwick the main town to find somewhere to kip. There were a lot of men trying to get digs as Shetland was very busy at that time. We met these old seamen off one of the safety boats that were in the harbour, and they invited us aboard to find a bunk. We were glad of that as the weather in Shetlands was terrible. By way of thanks we went ashore and bought the old guys a bottle of rum, some beer and whisky. I wasn't drinking but Bruce and Charlie were. They were all drunk and in their underwear when this old guy's dick fell out of his underpants. It came down to his knees and Charlie started to laugh and shouted 'oh, look, it's super cock.'

At Sullom Voe I worked as a joiner alongside a guy called George Rose, from Tain in Wester Ross. While he was home I heard his wife set about him with a hammer while he was in a drunken slumber. She was in jail for attempted murder and George was in hospital. I put round a collection for him and his kids to which most people contributed. However, there were always the usual pricks who didn't. Some said he had it coming to him. I collected about £250.

The job at Sullom Voe was coming to an end and it was the gaffer's job to say who would go first. I said to Charlie there were jobs for joiners in Germany and told the boss I was leaving. He had taken a liking to me for collecting for George Rose's kids and said to me, 'you would be here to the end, Sid.' So I said 'thanks, but no thanks.' 'I know, Sid,' he said.

Charlie and I set off for Germany to a little hamlet called Gross Schneen, eight miles south of Gottingen. We arrived on the Friday night. The Germans didn't work the weekend, but they did 10 hours shifts Monday to Friday. We had to get the police to phone the company, Ralph Bue. The general foreman came and let us onto the site, which had huts with beds and showers. We were building a school and all the German guys seemed to be gaffers, all shouting at the one time. When they were shouting at me, I would shout back for a laugh, "hands on head, 1945". The German guys would laugh and say to me: Schotlander, crazy in head.

The local people were very nice to us, and we often got invited to lunch. Myself, Charlie and an Irish guy gave them help to build the stalls for a beer festival. The Burgermeister gave us bikes that needed a wee bit of fixing, but they were great for us to get about the German countryside on. It was a small place and everybody knew us. One thing I will never forget was when we were in the local pub one Saturday night, a young man pulled out a gun. Suddenly this man from the crowd jumped the bar, took the gun off the boy and battered his head in with it. Nobody seemed scared. Men and women just went on drinking and talking. I thought, what the fuck is going on here? I still don't know the answer till this day.

While I was in Germany I got word by phone for me to start as a rigger offshore in the North Sea on the oil rigs. I left Charlie and made my way back home to Scotland.

I started with Wimpy on the offshore exploration rigs and while there I got word via my wife Joyce that my mother had died in Los Angeles. At such times the practice was for the company to give you the day off work and there was nothing I could do but to reflect on my mother and how our lives had been shaped by events such as the war. On a cold and stormy day I was left sitting aboard an oil rig in the middle of the grey North Sea, as she lay in her coffin by the sunny California shores of the Pacific Ocean. God rest her soul.

Wimpy offshore was a decent job but I was never really sure. If I had a regular job. Never felt sure if I would get the next trip.

When I was first with Wimpy, when the gas rigs went to the Orkneys, it was three weeks on, and one week off. You got the best hotels to stay in. Now it was cut to two weeks on and one week off. But the men offshore weren't happy with this and wanted the same deal as the merchant navy, a day onshore, for every day offshore. We had meetings on the oil-rigs and the shop stewards reported back with our demands to the companies, who promptly rejected this proposal.

The offshore companies then brought in helicopters from all over Europe to remove the workmen from the rigs and the North Sea was black with choppers flying guys to the shore. The men were said to be on strike and this lasted six weeks. I can remember a speaker at the Odeon Theatre in Glasgow telling to us to watch every step that Shell and the rest of the oil companies made as Shell had brought countries to their knees. Eventually, Shell agreed to the union's demand of two weeks on, two weeks off, and last-in first-out at pay-off. On a vote the men agreed to return to work. What we were never told was that Shell then paid every North Sea worker off, right down to the last of the shop stewards, then started back those they wanted.

In the next ten years under Maggie Thatcher, things went from bad to worse. I got a start offshore with OPM part of the Wood Group because I slept in the company's yard in my van till a vacancy came up.

While I was with OPM, Thatcher's government encouraged employers to get up to all sorts of things to beat the unions and many brought in individual contracts. This meant if you were getting £7.50 per hour, the company would send you a letter saying to you that next trip your rate would be £7 per hour. If you said no way, they paid you off as there would always be someone there to take your place. I showed Jimmy Boyle, my shop steward, one such letter I had got. He said I was the third guy to get one of these letters and that he was going to call in the delegate for the East of Scotland. The delegate, Mr. Tommy Lafferty arrived and decided to make my case and that of another man a test case.

There was no doubt what I had been paid off for as I had never had so much as a written or verbal warning in my three and a half years with OPM. The union took OPM to a tribunal for unfair dismissal in Aberdeen and this story made page one in the Aberdeen newspaper. The fucking trade union lost our case on a technicality as our contract was worded differently from rig to rig. I had only been on Brent Alpha six weeks that time as I had been jumping from rig to rig for the last three and a half years with OPM. We were only classed as being with the company for the six weeks we had been on the Brent Alpha and not the three and a half years we had worked for OPM on different rigs.

If we had thought at the time we should have sued the trade union for failing to protect us and losing our case. The company then brought out standard 90-day contracts, which meant that even if you were with the company for 10 years, you only ever had 90 days service. Fucking gangsters, making millions in profit and shafting us for a few quid.

When the union took our case through the courts it was time consuming and took over two years and in the meantime I got work wherever I could.

When the job with Peterhead Engineering finished I did anything including the back-breaking task of planting seedling trees (£27 per thousand) around Inverness for a contractor who worked for the Forestry Commission.

The contractor I worked for was a fly man and you had to chase him for your wages all the time. He was full of excuses and I was getting sick of this when I tracked him down to his local pub outside Inverness. I demanded my pay and he said he said he was sick of me and punched me in the face. He was only a little man and I easily pinned him over a table and rammed a thumb in each eye. The bar was in an uproar and berated me as a big bully, but when I told them the story about my weekly fight for wages I had earned, they slapped my back and said I was quite right and he was a prick.

Most of this time I stayed in Aberdeen where I had a flat, but sometimes I just stayed in a van or a caravanette. Aberdeen in

the 1960's, 70's, and 80's was absolutely mental. There were young and old guys from all over, in the city for a spree before going offshore, or on leave after doing their stint and on a spree before going home. This was how the Klondike Gold Rush must have been. The "Grab a Granny" nights were hilarious with men and women of all ages letting themselves go.

I didn't miss drink and kept my head together by running 10 miles a day, which was fairly easy because I don't smoke. I ran the 1983 Aberdeen Marathon to raise funds for Linn Moor School for handicapped kids in Peterculter, Aberdeen, a good cause recommended to me by a Captain in the Salvation Army. I went round the market place and the main roads in Aberdeen collecting 50p a time to run the marathons for the kids. I raised £350 and after I ran the marathon, the head teacher, Mr Wallace invited me to see the work being done at the school. I was very impressed, as they taught these kids to make all sorts of things. At one time, these kids would have been locked up for life with nothing to occupy them.

Linn Moor School sent me a nice letter thanking me for getting them a camcorder, but I had more reason to thank them, for what they had done for me. They helped me to have more faith in others as did Mr Wallace and his staff at the school.

I decided to do my next marathon for the Aberdeen and Peterhead branch of the Salvation Army they do a Christmas lunch for old folks in the area. I was working at Invergordon rig yard at the time for Peterhead Engineering and they sponsored me for the 1984 Aberdeen Milk Marathon, so I put out a collection sheet asking for donations at £5 per man. Most of the guys gave the £5 with no bother, then there were the usual pricks who would only give 25p per mile. Anyway on the night before the race I parked my caravanette that I was staying in at the starting line so that I wouldn't miss it, but through the night the police moved me on and this upset caused me to sleep in and be almost two hours late for the race.

The officials weren't going to let me take part but I persuaded them to make an exception as there was a lot of money for a good cause riding on it. The official time when I crossed the

finish line was nearly five hours but the real time (when my late start was taken into account) was three hours and ten minutes, an improvement on my previous years time and I even beat some of the runners who started two hours before me. The Press & Journal ran an article entitled: "Sydney scores on late shift" and there was a big photo of me crossing the finish line with the caption: "Sleepyhead Sydney Gallagher celebrates after finishing in a good time." I raised £700 for the Salvation Army.

Also while at Invergordon, one of the guys, Jimmy Walsh died on the rig. I put round a collection for his wife and collected £350 for her. It also let her know that the men were thinking of her. You got the usual mob again saying that they didn't really know Jimmy and moaning about the collections. I had only one thing to say to these people. Fuck you!

When the Invergordon rig job was finished we were told that we would get the next one. In the meantime, I went back to tree planting and while in Inverness one day I met a wee Japanese woman, a tourist who was painting along the banks of the River Ness. I think she was about 70 years old. I ended up taking her to show her one or two castles and she was very happy about that. She told me she would be leaving the following day and asked me to go with her for a meal. We went to a Chinese restaurant in Inverness where I found she could speak Chinese. She ordered our meal in Chinese but the waiter didn't understand her so she ordered it again in English. She said to me the reason he didn't understand her was because he was a Scots Chinese. I thought this was very funny at the time. Now I see more and more people of different nationalities mixing. Good for them.

As I said I had run the 1986 marathon for the Salvation Army Christmas dinner in Aberdeen, and because of this I got my lunch, breakfast, evening meal as well as my showers at Inverness Salvation Army Hostels. Thanks to Captain Bill Monaghan, I kept myself clean and well fed.

I was on my way to the hostel one day when a woman on holiday from New Zealand stopped me and asked me if I could direct her to the river Ness. I said that I was going down that way, so she came along with me. We strolled along chatting and

she asked me where I was going. I told her and she asked if she could come. I said I would be happy to take her. So she came, had her lunch, and met the captain and his family.

The lady's name was Jane McDonnell and she wanted to see Flora McDonald's grave on Skye and the Clan Chief of Glengarry. She asked if I would take her and she would pay me for my time and fuel. I was glad to take her as it would I would see a bit of Scotland myself. I took Jane to Skye first and she was very much impressed. Then to a place north of Kishorn. She thought it was very funny as she pointed out a drunken fight in the centre of the dance floor, saying no one seemed to bother about the fight. They just danced around it.

I then took her to see her own clan chief who was a right prick with an upper class English accent. I was in jeans and jumper and he asked her who I was. She told him I was running her around Scotland, but he just looked down his nose at me. Then he started telling Jane that the McDonnells were an old Scottish clan and I knew different as I had read a bit of Celtic history.

When I told him the McDonnells were not an old Scottish clan but an old Irish clan of Clan Donnald he went into a rage. "No, we are not!" he shouts. I told him to get the history book called 'In the year of the French,' about the 13th century uprising against English rule in Ireland where the French were supposed to come in numbers to help Ireland, although only a few came.

I told him that the MacDonnells were the most feared fighters for Irish freedom after the uprising. They gave the clan chief McDonnell a safe seat in Scotland and scattered the clan to America and Australia. I took Jane away from this English Scottish clan chief and she laughed. She said you could see that he did not like me.

The clan chiefs in the old days in Scotland took care of their people. After the "45 Rebellion" (1745) the clan system was wiped out and the people scattered across the globe. The chiefs sold out their people and the land was given over to sheep farming. The chiefs joined the English court in London on the proceeds of their sell out.

I took Jane round many places and we became good friends with captain Monaghan and his family. She also made many friends among the poor and the sick at the Salvation Army. She thanked me very much for driving her around Scotland and before she went back to New Zealand, asked if I would ever think of visiting there. I said I would love to go. Jane left and I went back to doing gardens and other odd jobs to earn a shilling. Some time later captain Monaghan said a registered letter addressed to me had arrived at the office. It had a New Zealand postmark, and when I opened the letter it contained a two-way ticket to New Zealand and money to buy things I might need. Ya beauty!

Going to New Zealand was like getting another chance to make a new go of my life. I told Joyce and she told me to go for it. Around about this time I had been doing a bit of motor trading and I'd had a van that was stolen and set on fire for which I got insurance money. I gave this to Joyce so that would do her till I got started in New Zealand.

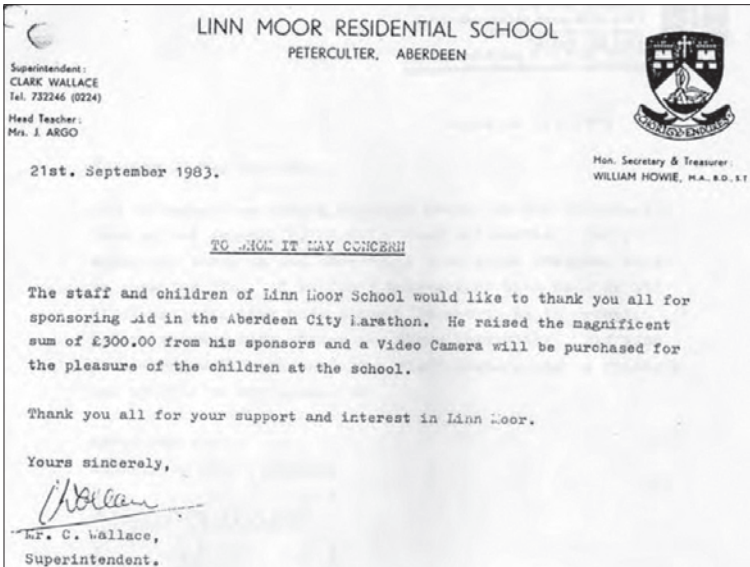
I should explain the situation with Joyce and me. My life with Joyce was always destined to be difficult. She wanted stability and I couldn't handle the steady life for too long without going off the rails. Once when I was working on the building of the High Flats at Dalmuir about three miles from my home I had an argument with the gaffer and wouldn't back down as I was in the right, but this led to me getting the sack. Rather than go home and tell Joyce who I knew would be livid, I decided to bail out to England for work as I had often done before, coming back after three or four months when I was sober and flush with money.

With that in mind I got drunk and set out for England on a bus. I woke up in a park next to a motorway at 2 am in the morning, frozen cold, with a sore face (somebody had obviously beaten me up) and asked a passing man in my best Oxford English if he could tell me where in England I was. Auchenshuggle he replied in broad Scots, that is about eight miles from where I lived. I had obviously been so drunk that the bus for England I had boarded had been coming from England or perhaps I had been thrown off the bus heading south.

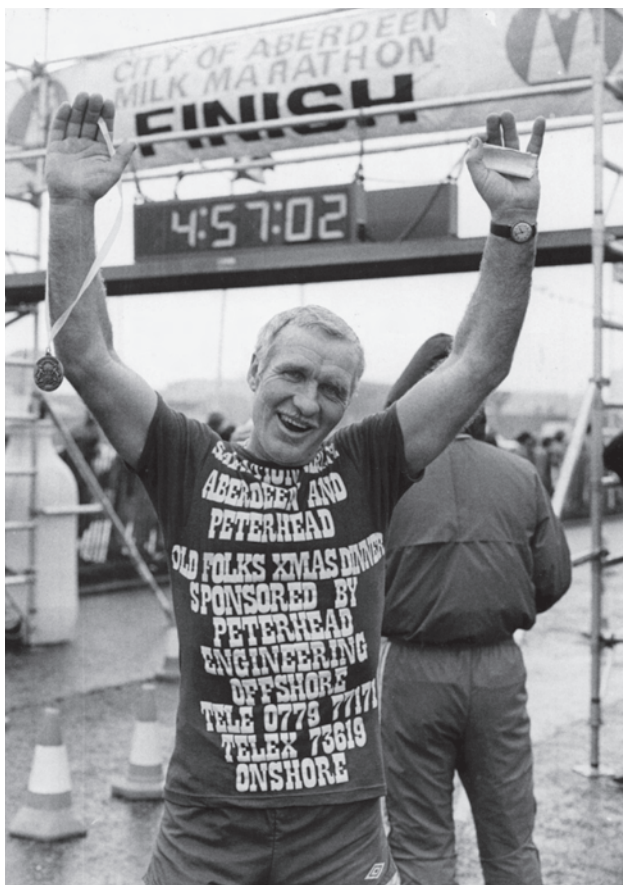
I went home to Joyce, cold, drunk and skint and told her the story of how I was in the right with the gaffer and wouldn't back down while two of my mates were in the same position but just accepted it like sheep. She said my mates might be sheep but they were still in a job and sent me packing to get a job and some money. Did I learn my lesson from this? Not a chance I did this over and over again.

Even when I stopped drinking my wandering ways and care-free attitude with regard to money meant that it could never work for us. 90% of our marriage troubles were my fault.



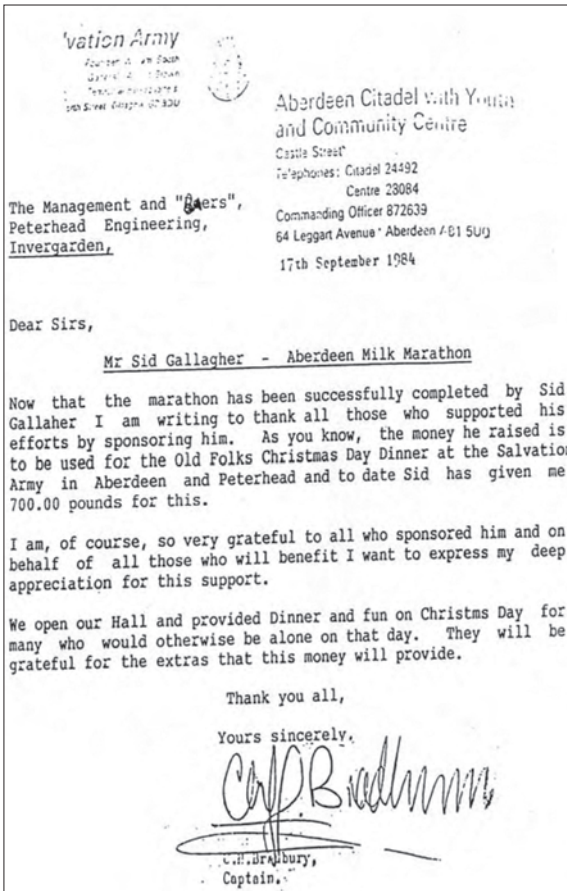


The photo opposite shows Sid No 1765 crossing the line to finish the 1983 Aberdeen Milk Marathon which raised cash for Linn Moor School.



This photo shows Sid finishing at the same venue in 1984 and was accompanied by the following article in the Aberdeen Press & Journal:

“Sydney scores on late shift! Sleepy head Sydney Gallagher ran the race of his life....after missing the marathon start by almost two hours. Officials agreed to let the rigger join the event when he slept in even though the runners were hours ahead. And the bleary eyed offshore worker responded by tearing round in 3 hours 10 minutes to raise £700 for charity. He even managed to finish two hours ahead of the last runner.



"I slept overnight in my caravanette next to the starting line," gasped Sydney afterwards, "but the police moved me on in the morning and I slept in. I was panicking. The charity cash had been pledged by my workmates. I couldn't say I had run the race," he said. Not fazed however the rigger pounded on and caught up with the back markers after only 10 miles. Sydney from Clydebank has run in all the previous Aberdeen marathons. The cash he said will go to the Salvation Army and a pensioners Christmas party."

Chapter 8

NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA (1986-1991)

When I arrived at Whangarei on the North Island of New Zealand I was able to pay Jane back by doing her massive garden. It took months. Jane then got me started in a big laundry business in Whangarei. I was doing all sorts of jobs for them. I was their general handyman.

Working in the laundry was O’K but there was one young gaffer who was a real prick of a man. He treated all the—mostly Maori—workers like shit and I knew that one day I would fall out with him as I was not prepared to let anyone speak to me in the way he did. Sure enough one day I had inspected all the clothes trolleys and gathered together all the ones that needed repairing.

The young gaffer kicked and scattered the trolleys for no reason as he walked past me and I shouted “hey poof don’t kick my work again ya ride”. He came back and said: “what did you say”? So I repeated it, but he said he didn’t understand a word I said. So I said to this Maori woman worker slowly and in my best English “will you please tell him that I said he is a guy that other guys shag and if he wants to come down to the river with me I will batter his cunt in”. After this incident I reckoned it was time I was moving on.

During my time in Whangarei I had written to a pal of mine in Duntocher, to ask if he knew which part of New Zealand John Cassidy, a friend from Clydebank who had emigrated, lived and worked. Peter wrote back to me and said all he knew was that he worked in the docks at Wellington. Taking a chance I sent a Christmas card to John Cassidy c/o New Zealand docks, Wellington, and lo and behold, the next thing I got was a letter from him telling me to come to Wellington and he would get me a job in the docks there.

John got me a job on a building site in Wellington. I was talking to him about how little of my wages I would be able to send home to Joyce because of the low exchange rate. He said to me “why not go to Australia where the pay is higher, my brother Pat will get you a job there”. John knew all the dockers in New Zealand, so they got me on a boat to Australia with the help of the ship’s crew. I just kept low and spent most of my time in an old cabin. When we arrived in Melbourne, South Australia, I got ashore by using a crew member’s boarding pass. When I was through the dock gates I gave the pass to the guy’s pal to return it to him.

I worked with Pat for a while then I got a job on a building site in Melbourne as a joiner. Pat was great. He gave me work, got me a card for a trainee, got me a few jobs as a rigger before I took off as a joiner.

There was plenty of work in different Australian cities and I followed it, but it was when I was in Perth that I started missing my family very much. I would not give in however, as I had been alone many times before. One day I collapsed in the street with terrible pains in my stomach and could not get up. I was taken to hospital. The doctor said that I was suffering from stress and told a male nurse to give me an injection. I felt my stomach settling and although it helped for the moment I was to suffer from pains the rest of the time I lived there.

My conscience had been pricked by what I saw in the army and I did regular voluntary work for Amnesty International in Perth as I thought they stood up for the oppressed people in the world. I also got involved with the church in Perth and did a lot of joinery work for them. I worked with a guy called Ray Rifkin who was very sick in the head and had illusions of starting street churches for kids. It was all in his head and he would never have had the ability to make it happen. Ray painted all the different signs that the church required and I accompanied him in his van to put them up. It was around this time that I became disillusioned with the church. The things that so-called Christians will say about people really put me off.

One morning on my way to meet Ray I bumped into one of the congregation who told me that Ray had slashed his wrists the night before. They found him with blood pouring out of his van. The following Sunday I went back to the church. I had met the minister and he had asked why I had been away. He said he would be saying a few words about Ray. The service was reaching the end and he was thanking the congregation for sending him and his family to Canada to see his father when he tagged on, "By the way, Ray Rifkin who was a member of this church passed away last week". I walked out of the church saying to myself, "You bastard". After all that Ray had done for him and his church. I never went back there again, and as it looked like I might have some trouble with immigration I decided to leave Perth, Western Australia and head for Newcastle in Queensland, East Australia.

By selling my car and a few items from my flat I got enough money to pay for my fare to Newcastle and have enough money to live on until I found a job. It didn't take long as there had been an earthquake there at the very end of 1989 and they were desperate for all sorts of workers. I had altered my National Insurance number and changed my name to Simon Gallagher to keep the immigration people off my back.

Jobs were ten a penny and I was soon working for a company that repaired buildings that had been damaged in the quake and was living in the Salvation Army hostel. I was also on emergency tax but this didn't really bother me at all. I was still feeling uneasy inside and my emotions were never far from the surface. I remember trying to take it out on a tramp who had asked me for money. I had cracked and told him to, "Fuck off". Then I grabbed a brick and threw it at him but it missed. He flung a bucket at me and it didn't miss, splitting my head open. He ran off laughing.

I laughed as I told this story to the captain at the Salvation Army. He also laughed and said that was God's way of punishing me for trying to hit him with a brick. God works in strange ways.

Shortly after this things really began to look up for me. I received money from two car crash insurance claims that amounted to £80,000. I had my own flat, money in the bank and a good job. There was a piece of lakeside land for sale in the Blue Mountains just outside Sydney. It had lobster beds and shell-fish with a cabin and a small boat. I was considering this and thinking about investing the money at the same time as looking about to see what else might be worth doing. There were also rumours of an amnesty for illegal immigrants. I fantasised about getting my Australian citizenship and my family coming over to visit me. The Australian dream seemed within reach.

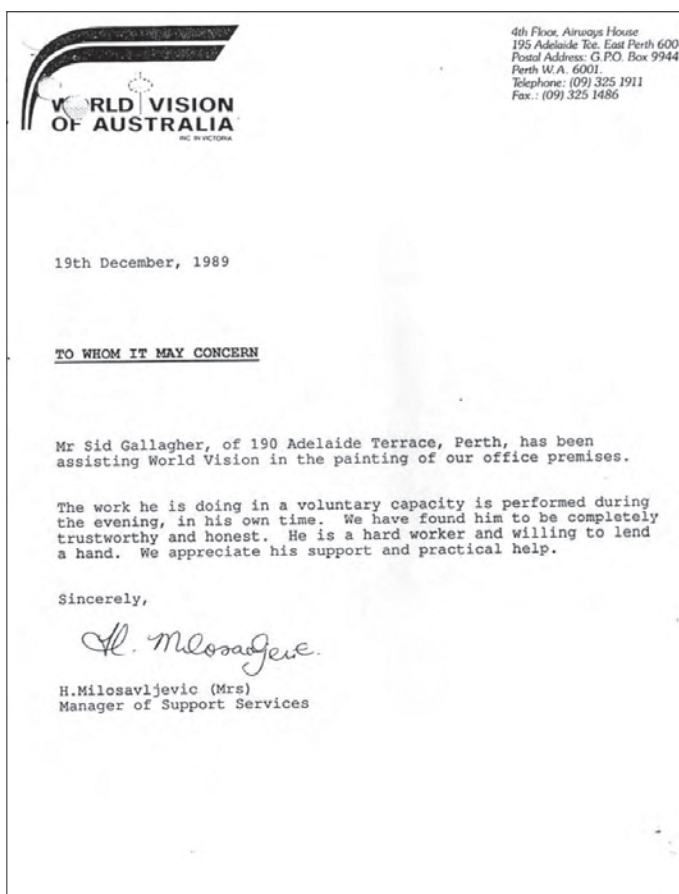
I still phoned Joyce regularly to see how she was managing. I had been away for a long time, but then Joyce and I had never really been able to live with each other. It had been fine when I worked on the rigs working two weeks on and one week off. I had tried not to get too involved with anyone. I had joined singles clubs but more for the company than anything else. However, you do end up hurting some people and some people end up hurting you. Strangely, one thing I could never have done was divorce Joyce, even though we were separated for so long.

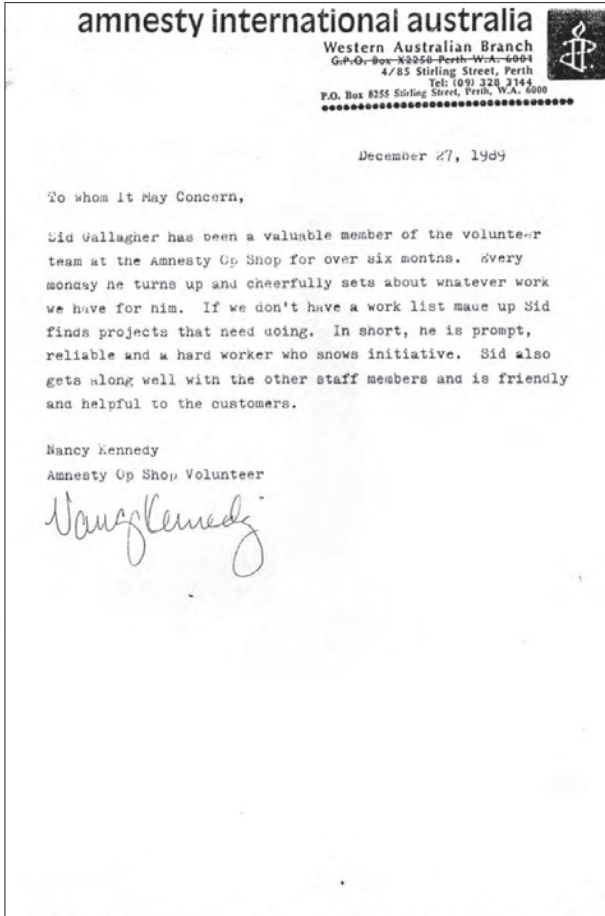
One day I had went to a church in Newcastle, Australia and from the pulpit, the minister or priest had guys with him from El Salvador, Nicaragua Honduras etc. The things they had to say about the USA in their countries were terrible. At the end of the service, the priest said that the last 51 coups in South American countries, the CIA were involved in 48 of them. How do you get world peace when the big guys are shitting on the wee guys?

With things working out well I was making all sorts of plans for my new life in Australia as I now had saved enough money to start my own business. But still wasn't sure what to do. Buy that wee fish farm or invest my money for ten years with that finance company adding £1000 per month. I was still working with Leighton construction so I had no real worries. And I could have went with the fruit pickers if I started to get any hassle with the tax or labour exchange people as I know all the ins and outs of how to get by in Australia legal or illegal.

One night I went out to make my weekly phone call home to Joyce. She was upset at the time. I never knew at the time but my baby Kristy was pregnant. Joyce told me that she loved me and wanted me to come home in ten days. That was the first time in six years that she said that she needed me, although I always knew she did. We could never express our love or need for each other. We never changed and even in 2004 after being separated for many years I still walked with Joyce and her dog Brandy most days.

My plans for an idyllic life in Australia were scrapped and I headed home to Joyce and my family.





While in Australia Sid did voluntary work with various church groups, the Salvation Army and human rights groups such as those above who valued his contribution.

Chapter 9

HOME AGAIN AND IN TROUBLE

In 1991 I left Australia within ten days of Joyce asking me to. I came home, put my money in the bank and told Joyce I would buy the house for her. But she didn't want this. The house was now in her name. I wanted to buy it for her as council houses were very cheap at the time. Anyway, she wasn't having it; she wanted to sell the house to my son, Andrew. I lost the plot and we fell out. Even though the evils of alcohol were a thing of the past I was still pig-headed and a new vice had replaced my old weakness and within a month of being home I had gambled away between £20 and £30,000. A nice present for the bookies. Like the tinkers I ended up living once more, in my van.

It wasn't long before I was off again, this time to Nigeria. I got a job with a company, Scotweld. If I thought the wages and conditions for our workers at home were bad, they were nothing compared to this place. We were O'K making £1,000 per week clear, plus expenses, but the Nigerian workers were paid 87 Naira, about £2.50 per day.

At this time, 1991, the country was being run by the army generals. They were being well paid by Shell to let the oil companies exploit the resources. There was no attempt to clear up the massive oil spills, which would go untreated. The recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is nothing to what I have seen in Nigeria. Lakes the size of Loch Katrine full of black crude oil and the surrounding forests/jungle devastated by this thick and toxic pollutant. Nothing said to Shell or the other oil companies.

When I finished work I went to the post office to pay my airport tax. The lady there, a Nigerian girl, had always made sure my letters were sent. The post wasn't always reliable. I paid the tax and told her she could keep the change. She started crying and said, 'all this money is too much.' I thought to myself

“poor cow”. If the local offshore guys who were on top money for Nigerians were getting £2.50 a day what was this poor soul making.

The Nigerian job didn’t last long and once I got back home to I tried to settle down but it wasn’t long before I was in trouble again.

I was living on my own in my old stomping ground in Clydebank on the 11th December 1994. The winter weather had caused the cancellation of local train services and because of this a woman friend asked me to run a friend who was visiting her to Glasgow, from where she had to catch a train. I agreed and after dropping the visitor off at Glasgow the women, who had accompanied us, Alice Frew asked, if I would stop at the Gleanhead Social Club, Duntocher, where she hoped to find her son who she wanted to see. I agreed to this but on the narrow road (appropriately called Farm Road) leading to the club a car blocking the road caused me stop as I could not pass. The driver was very aggressive young man with another youth and rather than argue with him I backed up and let him pass.

After he passed we pulled up at the entrance to the club where my friend was about to get out, but before she could do this the back window was smashed by a brick, which crashed into the back of my head. As I fell forward from the force of this blow another brick crashed through the front windscreen and struck the front of my head. I was stunned, bleeding badly from head and mouth and shouted for my woman friend to get help.

As she tried to get out the drivers side window was smashed in by a wooden baton, the force of which showered my face with broken glass. I tried to get out of the van to get away and was only half out of the van when one of my attackers struck me on the shoulder with the wooden baton or some other heavy object. I slumped back into the van and passed out.

Someone phoned for an ambulance but before it arrived I was rushed by car to hospital where I had stitches inserted in the back and front of my head, and was kept in overnight for observation. I left hospital the next morning with broken teeth and stitched head only to find that my van, which had been left

outside the club had been set on fire. The police told me that they thought that my attackers had done this to destroy any forensic evidence such as fingerprints. The police issued a statement to the press condemning the “totally unprovoked attack on Mr Gallagher” saying I was “an innocent victim of a vicious assault”, and appealing for witnesses to contact the Clydebank CID.

Six weeks after I was attacked I was delivering a lorry to a client when two schoolboys threw bricks or large stones at the lorry. I jumped out and tried to catch the boys getting one of them who I intended taking to his headmaster when a police car stopped and I ended up being charged myself. Contrary to the charges the boys later told Clydebank Police Court in May 1995 that I never assaulted them, but that I was trying to grab hold of them. The same boys also told Clydebank Police Court that there was bricks being thrown at the lorry I was driving, but the bricks were being thrown by boys from boys of another school, St Columbus’.

The only two people who said that I assaulted anybody were the two police officers. When the boys I was accused of assaulting gave evidence to Clydebank Police Court they said that I never punched anybody. Yet the first police officer told the court that I had one boy in a head lock and punched the boy’s head 4 or 5 times. I am a big strong man of 14 stone yet there were no marks were on the boy.

The police evidence was full of contradictions. The male police officer said he made the arrest on me while the woman police officer was taking statements. The woman police officer gave the court her evidence next and told the court the same story; that I had a boy in a headlock punching his face and that I let the boy go, grabbed another boy and punched his face also. This, after both boys told the court that I had punched no-one.

When the prosecutor asked the police woman who made the arrest on Mr Gallagher, she was speechless, till the prosecutor in a prompt said to the police woman “what you mean is that you both made an arrest on Mr Gallagher”. I said to the pros-

ecutor that she was not allowed to put words into the witness's mouths (which my lawyer should have said and not left it for me to say). I was told by Justice David Grainger to shut up and sit down. Anyway, Justice Grainger found me guilty of assault and fined me £175.

I looked at the judge in disbelief, and thought to myself that the same bastard I gave a hiding to when we were boys in East Barns Street was getting his revenge.

The Sun newspaper called the judge a fool and it caused a real stir when I refused to pay the fine and when brought before the court for this in September 1995 I super-glued myself to the wooden court "dock". The court was in an uproar and the officials had to send first for a joiner to dismantle the dock to allow it to be taken from the court and then for paramedics to loosen my hands from the court woodwork rail. I kept telling myself that fucking fool of a judge Grainger is not trying me for an assault on school boys, but he is remembering, as I was remembering, that I had given him a good hiding when we were boys.

Grainger does not hold any legal qualifications; he was an engineer and local councillor and was one time Provost of Clydebank. There are five Masonic lodges in Clydebank and most of the councillors I know are Masons so I would be surprised if he wasn't one. I refused to pay the fine on principle and was sentenced to seven days imprisonment which I did rather than pay a fine for assault and admit to being a bully when neither was true.

I got this case also opened up again in 2002 when my lawyers McCusker & McElroy, 61 High Street, Johnstone wrote to Clydebank court about the case, Clydebank Court wrote back to my lawyers saying that as this case was more than ten-years-old, they could not respond because the court papers had been put away. The guy who wrote from Clydebank Court told my lawyers that as far as he could recollect there were boys throwing snowballs at my van and that I had left my van and made an assault on two boys.

Well, I gave my lawyer the newspaper cuttings from 1996 which made it six years, and not ten years since this case was

in court, I asked my lawyer how can this man from Clydebank court state in writing that he can recollect Mr Gallagher's case from over ten years ago, yet he got the dates wrong by three or four years? My lawyers then put this case before the Scottish Criminal Case Review Commission, who refused my request that they declare any Masonic membership in their members and then decided that they could not review it because of the lack of written records of the trial.

To add insult to injury I was refused—by Board Member, Michael Lewis, QC—Criminal Injuries Compensation for the injuries I received from the unprovoked assault on me in my van outside the Gleanhead Social Club, Duntocher, because my subsequent conviction for assault on the schoolboys gave the decision maker discretion to refuse the award, even though on its merits it was admitted that an award was justified.

I said to the press at the time that I would rot in jail rather than pay a fine for a crime I did not commit, especially such a cowardly act as I was wrongly convicted of. But even if I had did what they said I did (which I didn't) how could that conviction have any bearing on my assault and injuries which had proceeded it? The excuse used to avoid paying me Criminal Injuries Compensation—my conviction of assault of the schoolboys—did not take place until six weeks after my injuries.

I was—and still am—incensed by the injustice of what had happened to me because of so called justice David Grainger—who has no legal qualifications of any sort—but even with all this happening I still tried to settle down to some kind of routine. I had stopped drinking over twenty years before in 1971, was living in Clydebank and spending days around Scotland mostly in my van, and enjoyed going for evening walks. I used to drive in my van to the Boilermakers Club every Saturday night in Clydebank. I kept myself to myself as I did not drink and I only danced with women I knew. I didn't want to get into an argument with drunks shouting about their woman.

One week there was a guy called John "Jake" Gillespie at the club. He was there with another guy whose girlfriend's ex-husband turned up. A fight started and Gillespie grabbed the

ex-husband round the neck and held him while his pal beat hell out of him. I don't like to see liberties taken and thought to myself 'fuck that, this guy needs a hand', so I punched Gillespie in the face and as he hit the deck I gave him a kick.

The club doormen got in between everybody and we were all barred. At the next meeting of the club I told them my side of the story. I was reinstated, but Gillespie and his mate were barred for life. Gillespie took it bad and held such a grudge, that every time he saw me when he was drunk he would try and attack me.

Unfortunately, this happened on several occasions.

I was out walking one rainy night, as I do every night whatever the weather. As I was passing a night club called the Business Park, I noticed Gillespie was at the front door trying to get in. When he saw me he says, "Gallagher, I want to talk to you". He tried to grab me but I hit him with my brolly, breaking his glasses. The club doormen found this quite amusing. The last I saw of Gillespie was him feeling his way along the club walls shouting for a taxi to get him home.

Yet again, on another walk who did I see but Gillespie coming out of the Mount Blow bar. "Gallagher, ya bastard", was his greeting as he adopted his fighting position. I kicked him in the shins and down he went. He pulled himself up the lamppost shouting, 'Gallagher, I am going to kill you.' I kicked him and he slid back down again. A man standing nearby said, 'That's enough or I will call the police.' I told the guy every time that bastard gets drunk; I have to put up with him wanting to fight with me.

Sadly that was not his last attempt. I was in The Horse Bar one night when Gillespie entered with his brother. Straight away he attacked me. The fight didn't last too long before we were pulled apart. This time however, it went to court. The head barwoman gave a statement to my lawyer saying that she and her staff saw Gillespie attack me. This, for some reason was not used in court.

I do not write this for people to feel sorry for me. In many ways I thought it was quite funny. My attitude was, "Oh no,

here we go again". But there was to be another event that was to have a devastating effect on my life in which Gillespie's continued aggression towards me played a significant part.

His next attack came unexpectedly as I was waiting outside the Boilermaker's Club in Clydebank. He came at me with a steel gate and in fear of my life I grabbed inside my van for my tool bag which was in the front sea for something to defend myself with. My hand rested on an axe and as with the van door open Gillespie had me cornered I struck out at him with it. He sustained a head wound and a shoulder wound requiring a total of fourteen stitches. The police duly arrived and put Gillespie into an ambulance.

Despite the fact that I was seriously injured to such an extent that my collar bone was dislocated and the bone was sticking up almost vertical on my shoulder, I was arrested, bundled into a police van and taken to the cells. This was at 11.50pm. Whilst I accept that police officers are not qualified doctors, it must have been apparent that I was the party in need of immediate hospital treatment. It wasn't until four hours later, at 3.50am, (after spending all that time in the cells) that I finally received hospital treatment. This treatment was only forthcoming after I repeatedly banged the cell door with my feet until an Inspector appeared and saw my injuries at which time he had me taken to hospital in a police van. The hospital doctor on duty, a Dr Hunter commented on the level of pain and distress I was suffering when I arrived at the hospital.

The hospital relocated my joint in the shoulder socket as best they could, strapped my arm to my body tightly across my chest and I was taken back to the cells. After my court appearances a subsequent operation I underwent involved cutting open and resetting my shoulder joint and stitching the muscle of the arm to the muscle of the shoulder. This took four hours.

The following day I was taken to Dumbarton Sheriff Court where I was remanded on bail pending further enquiries. It took the police fifteen months, whilst I was on remand, to make further enquiries. They only took statements from two witnesses, both of whom belonged to the same Masonic lodge as Gillespie.

This despite the fact that when the Boilermaker's Club asked for witnesses, nineteen people came forward, all confirming that they saw Gillespie attack me with a two meter rung steel gate. It seems the only people not to notice this gate were the two police officers who were at the scene.

Fifteen months later, without being interviewed or contacted by the police during this period, I was informed by my lawyer that I was being charged with attempted murder. To say I was shocked would be an understatement, but I was sure that this farce would be exposed. Fifteen months without a word then this bombshell.

I appeared at the High Court in Glasgow where my counsel, a Mr Ian Sharpe advised me to plead guilty. I was told that nine months would be the likely sentence if I would plead guilty. But I knew I was innocent and would not consider this.

When Gillespie was called to the stand to give evidence he was sporting a large Masonic badge on the breast of his blazer. I asked my lawyer Mr Murray McCarra after the hearing what he thought of the Masonic blazer badge, but he said he never saw it. He was 6 feet away and never saw it yet my son sitting 50 feet away at the back of the court saw it clearly

Despite two witnesses, John McGinlay for the defence and Denis Faulkner for the Crown testifying to having seen the steel gate and both stating that it was in the hands of my attacker, the police maintained under oath that there was no steel gate found at the scene of the incident.

The only Crown witness, Dennis Faulkner, who saw what happened, gave two different accounts of what he witnessed. One for the defence, and one for the prosecution. He had also given a statement to the police on the night of the incident along with a false address. It was myself that had to give my Advocate, Mr. Sharpe his correct address. When asked if he, Faulkner could identify anyone in court who had been present at the incident, he pointed out a QC, sitting at the back of the court. Hardly a competent witness.

One man not in court was Kenny Webb who was a doorman at the Boilermaker's Club and tried to pull the gate away from

Gillespie. Both men are members of the same Masonic Lodge. Later Webb had said he didn't give evidence about this because he didn't want to take any sides between me and Gillespie.

Many people came forward to give me information. One woman told a lady friend of mine she could not go to court because she would be too embarrassed. I have also been told that the steel gate the police said didn't exist, was given to the staff to take inside by the police themselves.

I was found guilty and sentenced to six years in prison. My legs turned to rubber when I heard the sentence pronounced.

Kenny Webb didn't want to take sides. But he watched me get six years to protect one of his fellow Masons. A few of the other staff who took the steel gate from the police including another club doorman Tam Sloan were also in the same Masonic lodge as Gillespie. Lodge number 543, St John (Dunbartonshire).

My lawyer Mr Murray McCarra must have been an insensitive bastard. He shook hands with me and told me it could have been worse. Maybe he meant that if I'd killed him I would have got life. I was numb from shock and I still thought that this was all a terrible mistake that would be rectified on appeal.

I tried to fathom what had got me six years in jail for attempted murder, a crime I did not commit. Was it revenge for my protests in the dock at Clydebank? Was it Masonic bias in favour of Gillespie by his brethren in the police, the court service, or the jury? The need to wear what was the largest Masonic blazer badge I have ever seen suggested that Gillespie needed the help of his brethren. Did the jurors have the same religious bias that my old school teacher—who thought me a fenian—had because of my name. Was it a combination of all or some of these things? I did not know but there was some force at play that saw my honest self-defence which was witnessed and spoken to by sober people be disregarded and discredited by drunks.

Whatever the cause of my predicament my first job was to get the truth out. I was shocked when my lawyers told me that I could not appeal the decision or sentence of the court, and I disputed this. Eventually after much pressing by me I was successful in having George Galloway MP intervene on my behalf and

my lawyers relented and agreed to pursue my appeal. However I don't think they did this with any conviction. It was left to my son have notices put in the papers asking for witnesses to what had happened at the Boilermaker's Club as I was sure that if the truth was told I would be vindicated.

I later learned that a taxi driver had come forward to say that he and his passenger had laughed when they saw "two old guys fighting, one with what looked like a ladder [the runged railings] and the other with a piece of wood [the axe], outside the Boilermaker's Club on the night in question." This would have been new evidence for consideration by the Appeal Court but for whatever reason it was not used and my QC, Mr Duguid. Mr Duguid might have been better named Naeguid, because that is what he turned out to be—no good to me.

Mr Duguid was granted leave to appeal the sentence and the conviction but for some reason abandoned the sentence appeal. It is clear to me that if you have the money you will get the best justice that money can buy, but if you are on legal aid you will get what they think you deserve, and your views are largely ignored.

My appeal was delayed because my lawyer was unable to obtain a copy of the judges report which is normally given within 14 days of the trial. In my case it took my lawyer three and a half months to get an answer and then it was to the effect that Lady Cosgrove had lost her notes but that this did not matter because the jury had been satisfied as to my guilt.

Apparently my trial was the first to be audio recorded as well as filmed and if so would have shown that Gillespie was sporting a large Masonic blazer badge. In her summing up to the jury Lady Cosgrove took up a page and a half for the prosecution evidence and one paragraph for the defence case.

The defence case summing up by Lady Cosgrove had a glaring omission in that she did not point out to the jury that it was accepted in my trial that myself and John McGinlay were the only people involved at the scene of the incident who were sober. Nor did Lady Cosgrove mention the fact that Dennis Faulkner gave two contradictory accounts of what happened

on the night of the incident as well as giving a false address to the police.

The Appeal Court sided with their fellow judge by claiming with regard to the omissions in her summing up that in any case “the evidence would be fresh in the jury’s mind” and “she [Lady Cosgrove] had made it clear at the outset that any comments that she made on the evidence could be ignored by the jury if they chose and furthermore that the jury could of course take into account any of the evidence even if it was not mentioned by her”. This staggering get-out clause for Lady Cosgrove raises the question as to what she is doing at the trial if her summing up can be partial and ignored? Why give a page and a half of comment for the prosecution and a paragraph for me if it was meant to be ignored? Nor surprisingly my appeal was not successful. It was a farce.

I was brought up to believe that we had the best shipbuilders, army and justice system in the world. The weeds grow high on the slipways at John Brown Clydebank, which have long been redundant; I can’t think of our army without picturing myself standing with a rifle between my knees winding up a hand-crank siren with both hands, and now that I have witnessed the Scottish justice system at close hand—Masonic dress and all—it is an even bigger joke than the other two things we were supposed to lead the world in. It is a fucking joke.

Opposite: Articles from national and local newspapers recorded Sid’s protest at Clydebank District Court when he glued himself to the dock as he could not appeal the sentence passed on him by his old sparring partner David Grainger (photo and text about Grainger from Scottish Justices Association website)

'BULLY' SID HOWS TO CLEAR NAME

By HUGH BOAG
BATTLING grandad Sid Gallagher will fight to clear his name after he was branded a "downright bully" by a court.

Mr Gallagher (56) has always maintained HE was the victim after his van was stoned when he stopped at traffic lights.

And he went to jail rather than pay a fine for assaulting two schoolboys.

In a last defiant gesture before being jailed he glued himself to the lock of Clydebank District Court.

Mr Gallagher spent three days

Assault rap after van is stoned

in Barlinnie Prison for refusing to pay the £175 fine.

But back home in Gran Street, Whitecrock, Clydebank he remains defiant: "I was the one attacked yet the JP branded me the bully. I did not hit any of the boys but I did try to catch them."

"I was ready to go to jail for as long as necessary to show how wronged I feel."

However, Mr Gallagher is still angry that he had no right of appeal against conviction.

He said: "I was told by my lawyer that there is no right of appeal from a district court because no minutes are kept."

Grabbed

"That is something I feel is very wrong and now want to see changed."

Mr Gallagher's van was stoned by youths in Kilbowie Road.

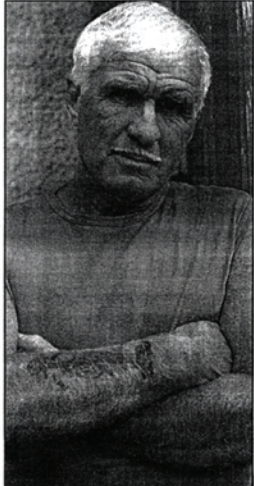
He got out and tried to catch one of the youngsters but he got away so he grabbed another boy.

"I wanted to take one of them to their headmaster so they could tell him what they were doing," Mr Gallagher said.

A police car stopped and Mr Gallagher thought they had come to help him.

However, he was taken to Clydebank Police Station and three months later was charged with assaulting two boys aged 13 and 15.

"I would never hit children and I feel only anger and frustration about what I have been put through," he said.



ANGRY... Sid Gallagher did time rather than pay fine for assault. Picture: BRIAN HICKY

David Grainger (NS) David is from the Sheriffdom of North Strathclyde, sitting as a justice in the courts of Dumbarton and Clydebank since 1980. He has a background in authority and was Provost of the Clydebank District Council.

YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT STICK, YOUR PHONOUR

Protestor stuck in jail!!

A CLYDEBANK man who defied the Scottish justice system has been imprisoned for seven days with his hands glued to a court bar.

Sidney Gallagher of 21 Gran Street Whitecrock refused to pay a fine of £175 after being found guilty of assault by Clydebank District Court.

Commenting the decision at

a Clydebank Meas Court this week Mr Gallagher said: "I would rather rot in hell than pay this fine."

Faced with the alternative of seven days imprisonment Mr Gallagher made a defiant protest against the establishment. As police approached to hand off the accused, Mr Gallagher brandished a strip of glue with which he welded his right hand to the court bar.

Police scoffed momentarily, at a loss how to deal with this unprecedented resistance until the Justice of the Peace ordered that the bar be taken away

along with Mr Gallagher.

As both Mr Gallagher and the essential part of court furniture were marched away the courtroom erupted into giggles before the Justice of the Peace sternly called "Order in Court" and calm was restored.

On May 18 1995 Clydebank District Court found Mr Gallagher guilty of assault on two young boys after stones had been thrown at his van by school kids. Mr Gallagher still insists that he was the one under attack.

Glue protest in dock

By BERNARD KERNAN

A MAN jailed for refusing to pay a fine glued himself to the dock in protest yesterday.

Syd Gallagher had to be dragged out of the courtroom by two policemen - with the dock still stuck to his hand.

Gallagher was sentenced to seven days in jail after refusing to pay a £175 fine for assault at Clydebank District Court.

But as two policemen approached him, he took the adhesive from his bag and stuck his hand to the bar.

Then he turned to the bench and told stunned officials: "I would rather rot in hell than pay up." Two policemen in the court battled to pull him free before realising he was stuck fast.

The angry JP ordered police to lift the dock right off the floor - with him hanging in it.

An eyewitness said: "The whole place was in uproar - even the court officials couldn't stop themselves laughing. "Nobody knew how to handle it."

"Eventually the JP said: 'You'll just have to lift the whole bar out with him attached'."

"The police pulled the dock right off the floor and pushing him sideways through the exit door."

"They managed to cut it off outside before taking him away in a van. The court was absolutely packed, too."

Gallagher, of Clydebank, was originally fined for assaulting two young boys. He claimed





*Proper dress for giving
evidence under oath?*



Or what about this?

Of course the Grand Master Mason of Scotland in the photo (above right) would not appear in this garb in court, but this extreme example makes the point about witnesses appearing in court with any Masonic symbols on display. Be that “the largest Masonic blazer badge I have ever seen in my life” as described by Sid Gallagher or the discreet Masonic signet ring or secret sign.

Does displaying Masonic symbols signify anything? Would the evidence given by men in these types of dress be treated on a par with that of a non-Mason by any of their brethren in the jury? Surely Masonic badges or secret signs are for the express purpose of signalling to others that the wearer is a member of the Craft, whose members give and expect to be given preferential treatment/aid by their fellows.

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MASONIC FORUM - Freemasons for Freemasonry - Year 2010 Forum Index • General discussion & Craft Masonry • Freemasonry under attack in Scotland

The time now is Tue Jun 29, 2010 4:02 pm

POST REPLY Page 1 of 1

Author	Message
dbdent	<p>Freemasonry under attack in Scotland</p> <p>2/10/2006</p> <p>Freemasonry under attack in Scotland</p> <p>The Scottish Parliament Wednesday rejected a petition calling for an inquiry into how many Freemasons there are in the police and the judiciary. Sidney Gallagher brought forward the petition to the Public Petitions Committee was reported to have been thrown out of the Edinburgh-based parliament after shouting at its MPs.</p> <p>Convenor Michael McHugh said there had been a number of petitions on the topic in the past and had referred them on to the Justice Committee, which then carried out a full inquiry. "I don't think this petition adds anything to that inquiry. I don't think there's any value in taking it forward," McHugh was quoted saying by PA News. The committee simply agreed to vote the latest petition, Gallagher, described as a 66-year old joiner from Glasgow, shouted that he wanted justice before being led out by security staff.</p> <p>Police were said to have later questioned the petitioner, who later revealed he had been sentenced to six years in prison for attempted murder, claiming that two officers, who gave evidence against him, were Freemasons. An inquiry by the Home Affairs Committee of the British Parliament in 1998 concluded that there were a "large number of Freemasons within the criminal justice system," but said that the numbers in themselves give "no general cause for concern." It reported that it is "not possible on the evidence we received to say that there has never been any abuse of masonic contacts" despite the many allegations.</p> <p>"There is a widespread public perception that freemasonry can have an unhealthy influence on the criminal justice system," the committee said. It said that it "unfairly believe that one of the main reasons for freemasonry's poor public image is a perception that it is a secret society" while recommending that members themselves of the secret brotherhood address such a perception. A government survey at the time found that there were at least 240 judges in the UK who admitted they were masons and over 1,000 magistrates.</p> <p>Tue Feb 21, 2006 9:23 am</p>
Hjoirir	<p>Re: Freemasonry under attack in Scotland</p> <p>Joined: 23 Mar 2006</p> <p>Posts: 3</p> <p>League: Dallas, Texas</p>

Sid's petition to the Scottish Parliament calling for a register of freemasons in the justice system caused worldwide interest and his peaceful protest when he interrupted the Public Petitions Committee during a session of parliament was reported widely.

*This US Masonic forum claimed
"Freemasonry under attack in Scotland".*

Chapter 10

PRISON, PAIN & PAINTING (1997-2000)

When the Barlinnie Prison cell door slammed behind me my first feelings were of shock and disbelief; how had Jake Gillespie got off Scot free when he had tried to kill, or at the very least seriously injure me? This followed a pattern that I knew of. Jake Gillespie, the man that nineteen witnesses saw attack me once hit a woman with a coffee table. The woman received £1200 in criminal injuries compensation. He was taken away by police, but was never charged or jailed. Why?

He continued to harass this woman by banging on her door and windows, putting her and her family in fear of their lives. The police were called, but no charges were ever brought against him. Why?

He threatened the woman's daughter and child, again in the street, again with witnesses, but no charges were brought against him. Why?

Gillespie worked with UIE Clydebank Shipbuilders and at the same time claimed sickness benefit. Police notified the Social Security Office of a £6,000 fraudulent claim he had made. A previous case of a similar nature—a man convicted of fraud for £3,000—had seen a man given a sentence of one year. Yet no charge was brought against Gillespie. Why?

The more I thought about my situation my disbelief turned to anger, and then rage.

Though angry and with many unanswered questions swirling around inside my head I had more pressing problems to deal with in prison; survival.

In many ways prison was exactly how you would imagine it to be. My first year was spent in Barlinnie where there was

a lot of violence and slashings, usually connected with drugs. Some guys would lean across you to get at their victim. It was normally some dealer getting a young junkie to slash a guy who owed them. The junkie would then have to go on protection himself.

I tried to keep myself to myself and I found that I got on with most of the prisoners. The screws were a different matter. There were a few decent ones who were doing a job and did it without an attitude, and didn't try and act the big man. But there were others who did have a bad attitude. The kind of guys who were bullied at school, and had no power or control. As soon as they got a uniform and a badge they remembered all the times they cried instead of fighting back. Now it was their time to fight back and for them to do the bullying.

There were also some very nasty, hard guys in prison, some who'd done twenty years. They took absolutely no shit from the screws. The screws knew these guys had nothing to lose so they left them alone. I loved it when these guys threatened the screws, showing them up for what they really were, dirty, cowardly bastards.

We were locked up at five o'clock on Friday night until seven o'clock Monday morning. One hours exercise each day and three half hour meal breaks. Five hours of being occupied. The rest of my time I lay in my cell thinking of what had happened to me. Festering, loathing and hating. It burned in me.

What made it worse was that at a time in my life when I should have been free from trouble having been tee total for many years and living a quiet life I had been wrongly convicted—twice. Perhaps at times in the past I avoided conviction when I should have been convicted for crimes such as breach of the peace and assault, but to be wrongly accused and convicted of attempted murder was just unimaginable.

I took to keeping myself super fit in prison, speed walking every day, rain, hail or snow. In the gymnasium I would knock hell out of the punch-bags, seeing the faces of the lying cops and bent lawyers who had put me away. Seeing them shake hands when they sent down some other poor bastard, guilty or not.

I had so much anger in me needing to come out. I must have looked as though I was on a mission as one of the really hard and violent prisoners said to me, "What are you up to Sid? On the punch-bags every day and the speed walking. Are you planning on taking over?" I said, "no. I'm just keeping fit. I'm challenging no one".

A lot of the guys doing long sentences tried to help me to face up to what they saw as a fairly short one. One guy who had done a 12 year stint was now back in for 14 years. He said if he got caught by the police on his next job they would have to kill him.

The injustice of my wrongful conviction would not leave me and every now and again something would help refuel my anger. Such as reading about this cop from Arbroath, who in a drunken state had slashed a young guy's throat three times. He said in court that he'd thought the boy was trying to sell drugs to his daughter. His lawyer said he was a Falkland's hero, (Probably in the same way I was a Malaya hero) and that he had apologised to the boys' family when he had sobered up. He got eighteen months community service for attempted murder. Where is the justice in that?

I learned how to survive. I had loaned my phone-card to this young guy so that he could call his girlfriend. He used up the entire thing, promising to replace it. He never did. So I threatened him and told him to get me a new one. Later I noticed that he was pointing me out to these other guys for a doing. I had got to know a really hard con, Jamie. We did the speed-walking together and I mentioned this to him. Jamie had the little shit in terror of his life. Jamie was getting all sorts of stuff from the wee guy and I got my phone-card. Eventually his mates asked me to call Jamie off, but not to mention that they had asked.

Party 14 was the work party I was assigned to in Barlinnie and the screw in charge was a Mr. Duffy. He was a decent guy who didn't need to throw his weight about to prove anything. I was the cleaner for the screws mess and he used to keep me all the cigarette ends from their ashtrays in a tin in his drawer.

I didn't smoke but was able to use them to barter with the guys that did.

There were, as I have said, other screws that just wanted to mess things up for you. After my year in Barlinnie I transferred to Greenock where there was less violence.

In Greenock prison we had a prison officer called Spratt who must have seen too many prison movies about Alcatraz, the way he strutted about and treated people like dogs. He thought he was something, but in truth he was a clown. He used to boast to the other screws that he never brought food in like they did, but got everything made for him by the prisoners in the kitchen. He was so big headed that he thought all the prisoners were too scared of him to try anything funny, but if he had known the truth the salty taste in his sandwiches was not sea salt, but urine and the mayonnaise flavour that he liked so much was due to the fact that the boys used to rub the bread round the bell end of their knob before spreading the butter on it.

On my run in to being released I was transferred first to Dungavel where I began attending English classes and then to Norrlands. Attending English classes was one way of getting your head out of prison. It was relaxed and informal and run by a lovely woman, Val Parry. One day we had been having a laugh and wandered from the lesson into a few dirty jokes. This was reported to Willie Smith, a screw who did not like me one bit.

Acting on this report Smith took me out of the class because I was talking dirty to the teacher and made me go and see the psychiatrist. I was very angry and told the psychiatrist that I was seeing him under protest. I told him my story, emphasising that it was the secrecy of the Masonic order that had put me in prison and that I found it hard to live with. He said he was not a Mason and that he was there to listen.

He reported back that I never at any time spoke to the teacher on my own, that I was bitter because of what the state had done to me, as it was myself that had been attacked. So I was vindicated.

It didn't take long for Smith's petty revenge. My pal Dave Johnston asked if he could use the chapel to practice guitar

when it wasn't in use. "Anyone else," was Smith's question. "Sid Gallagher", Dave replied. Smith turned blue and said to Dave, "No, permission refused. No explanation required".

It was easy to get my own back. The screws hated giving you exercise as it meant they had to stand out in the cold. They would ask if we wanted to watch a video instead. To my surprise, most prisoners wanted to watch TV. I always demanded my exercise and usually made enemies getting it. Sometimes it was just four screws and me in the exercise yard. Ha Ha!

On Christmas day at Dungavel I demanded my exercise as usual and due to the time of year there was only one young female prison officer available to escort me. I got on well with this young English lass and I decided to cut it short after four laps of the yard and said O'K that's enough for today as I could see she was freezing cold. "Oh thank you Sid she said" and put her arms round my neck to give me a hug. I laughed and said "that's all I need, if they see you doing this we will both get locked up". We laughed about this. Mind you if it had been Smith who was on duty I would have walked till Boxing Day if they had let me.

There are good and bad in all walks of life and while preparing for my release at Noranside I also met some very good people who I am very grateful to. The RC Padre, Father Neil Gallagher, the Minister Andy Inglis and his wife, and Helen Douglas the ex-Minister were wonderful people and I keep in touch with them to this day.

During this time approaching my release, my desire to express what was raging inside me increased and I began to paint again. I had brought my paintings from Greenock and Dungavel to the art class at Noranside and painting again became something of a haven for me. When I was there it was not like being in prison. I loved painting and my anger and passion just flowed on to the page. I was telling myself I was going to make people sit up and see what could happen. My subject matter was obviously concerned with the injustice of the legal system and the sinister influence of the Masonic order.

During my time at Greenock I met Fiona who was a young girl who worked with the art teacher. She was very moved by one of my paintings depicting slavery. I told her she could have the painting and in return she brought me a book on Scottish history. She was a lovely girl who was working closely with a young prisoner. She spoke to him every day. When he killed himself she was completely devastated. She said she could not handle this tragic way of life, could not accept life being so cheap. She left shortly afterwards.

My hate and loathing for the system showed in my paintings in a way I could never have expressed in words. As my painting progressed I was given lots of encouragement. The art teacher said my paintings reminded her of a German painter from the 1930's who had created work depicting the evil of Hitler's Germany. High praise indeed. Some of my fellow prisoners said, "That's brilliant Sid, you're no' half showin' the bastards". It was at this point I decided to protest my innocence with the help of my paintings. I would take my protest to the cities of Europe.

There were other innocent men in prison at the same time as me who were doing longer stretches. One big simple guy, Stefan Kiszko, who did 17 years for raping a young girl. He was let out after DNA test proved it could not have been him. A poor, big bloke with the mind of a ten-year old suffering 17 years in prison as a child molester. Stabbed, slashed and hot water thrown at him.

Robert Brown, 25 years. Paddy Hill, 17 years, lost his father during his time. All those lives fucked up by state corruption. How do these people live with themselves after putting an innocent man away for a quarter of a century.

My case does not compare with the injustice suffered by these men, but it is just as real to me, and I was determined to show this injustice, not just for my own sake but for the sake of all who had suffered in the same way as me.

Chapter 11

FREEDOM TO PROTEST MY INNOCENCE

When I was released from prison on licence on the 7th July 2000 I was put in touch with a prison after-care group who eventually helped me to get a flat in the City centre of Glasgow. I was able to go for walks, meet people again and get involved. The first thing on the agenda was to have my case considered by the Scottish Criminal Case Review Commission and as my lawyer Mr Murray McCarra—the one who couldn't see a large Masonic blazer badge from six feet away—was showing no interest in this I sacked him and had another legal firm, McCusker McElroy & Co take the case on.

Because of the Masonic element in the trial the first thing I asked my new lawyers to do was to ask the SCCRC for a declaration of Masonic membership of their members and this was done, but the SCCRC refused to give these details.

I didn't hold out much hope for a fair review by the SCCRC so I had decided that I would have to look to other means to show up the injustice that I had experienced and to this end decided to show my paintings outside the High Court in Glasgow. I wanted everyone to know see and feel how angry I was.

I set up my exhibition and guess what? In a short time some court officials arrived with the police and told me I was not allowed to do this. I said I had taken advice and as long as I wasn't defacing anything or making my paintings permanent I would be allowed to do this. Again they said no, so I asked to see the court manager. I was taken into his office where he asked to see my paintings. They depicted the brutality of the police towards the miners during their strike. He looked long and hard at them and finally said, "You can show your paintings on the railings on the other side of the road from the court." I thanked him

and as I was leaving he said, "My father was a miner". Then he winked.

My attempts to show my paintings in Clydebanks was farcical. I was bounced between the Council and the police, writing and waiting for a reply, of which none ever came. But at least I knew they were talking and wondering what to do with me. While they were making up their minds I set off for The Hague in Holland.

I ate at the Libra Centre there, which was a bit like the Salvation Army, and lived out in the open in parks and railway wagons. The people at the Libra Centre were very helpful. I was able to shower, the food was cheap and the tea and coffee free. Some of the people who stayed there helped me get my paintings along to the Peace Palace where I set them up. I was told by two police officers I would need to get permission from the police station in The Hague. This was easily done and the police asked if they could photograph my paintings outside the Palace. I was well received by the police and the Dutch people as well as the many tourists who passed by.

Next I went to Luxembourg, to the European Court of Justice. I found Luxembourg very conservative and money orientated. The first night I slept under trees at the end of the railway station, but security came with dogs and told me to move on. I was pulling my paintings and luggage about on my barrow when I saw chapel grounds. I hid my bags and sleeping stuff in a gulley in the grounds. The following day the Town Hall gave me permission to show my paintings outside the railway station. I then transferred to the European Court of Justice to display my paintings there and was immediately surrounded by security people. I had to move to a site on a dual carriageway opposite the court where many people took photographs and asked questions about my case.

When I returned to the chapel to get my bags the groundsman told me the police had taken them away. It took a lot of going back and forth until I was able to get them back.

My next stop was Strasbourg and this is where disaster struck. Only one bag turned up. My barrow with my luggage

and paintings had gone missing. I went to security and they checked my ticket and my baggage insurance. All they could do was to blame the airline. I was absolutely gutted. As I had no money for accommodation the security people gave me 80 Francs and a flight back to Glasgow the following day.

I was not to be beaten though. I returned to Strasbourg with enlarged photographs of some of my paintings and some new material for my protest. I was surrounded by soldiers, when I mistakenly went in front of the Parliament building, which you are not allowed to protest in front of. The French police were very helpful and interested. Some of them could read English and were interested in my placards. They showed me the way to the European Court of Human Rights where I continued my protest.

My protests at home were helped when Clare Harris from the Big Issue did a story on my fight for justice and the European demonstrations.

Encouraged by this I was soon demonstrating with my placards in front of the Scottish Parliament building every month. I went to the trouble of making a nine foot high crucifix and setting it up at the Temporary Scottish Parliament when it was on George IV Bridge Edinburgh. The cross had notices on it telling of my grievances and the police weren't too bad about it.

I did these protests with people from an organisation called Scotland Against Crooked Lawyers. I fear however, that I was too brash for them, with my big cross and my harsh statements. Now that the new Parliament building is open I demonstrate there on a regular basis. I want the tourists to see the other side of Scotland. The secret societies with their influence over the judiciary, the police, politics, and many other aspects of Scottish life.

I petitioned the Scottish Parliament to have the police and others connected with the courts declare Masonic membership but the Public Petitions Committee just kicked the petition into the long grass. I was in the Holyrood parliament on Wednesday 8th February 2006 when the convener of the PPC, Michael McMahon decided to end the petition. I stood up and told the

committee that the public petitions process was a farce as they had refused to allow me to speak to them, but I would continue to raise the matter until I got justice. The parliament's stewards asked me to leave and I did so but was interviewed by two policemen outside the building. If this is how our new devolved parliament operates then we are in a sorry state.

I took this travesty of parliamentary democracy up with my constituency MSP, Pauline McNeill, but she wasn't interested as her husband is a Procurator Fiscal, but I read in the papers how she did make a big song and dance about petitioning for the release of Kenny Richie, a Scots guy from Edinburgh on death row in America for murdering a child. She said he was wrongly imprisoned, yet she told me to forget about my miscarriage of justice and get on with my life.

Rosie Kane MSP took up my case when the Scottish Socialist Party had MSPs, but the party split up over a scandal involving their leader and they lost all of their seats in the Scottish Parliament. I also sent a copy of my petition, no. 693 to Jack McConnell, who was then First Minister. I also wrote to the SNP leader Alex Salmond MP but he refused to declare if he was a Mason or not.

What I, and many others are calling for, is new legislation which requires all police and prison officers, court officials, lawyers and judges to declare membership of any secret societies. This makes sense as at the very first degree, the Entered Apprentice Masons promise to "prefer a brother over any other poor person in the same circumstances". I think that I am entitled to know if decision makers are dealing with me as their equal or as a non-Mason, or profane as they call them.

Most members of the public I speak to agree with my argument about secret societies as do some policemen. The police in Dundee however took a dim view when I did my protest on a crucifix up there, and four of them made me get out of Dundee fast. Perhaps they didn't like the mention of the Masonic officers who had stitched me up. Anyway the crucifix was on the top of my van when I left Dundee in a hurry, but it was a windy day and in my haste I must not have secured the cross properly

and when I got home it was not there. The cross and must have fallen off. I hope it didn't hit anyone, unless of course a Dundee policeman.

On Christmas Day 2005 I climbed above the main door to Clydebank Town Hall with placards and the big crucifix protesting about the injustice I had suffered under the legal system. Though the sentence for assaulting two schoolboys was only a fine and the eventual prison term for not paying it a matter of days, the stigma I felt for being branded a bully still incensed me. Despite spending the whole of Christmas day there with police, firemen, and a posse of journalists from TV, radio, and the newspapers there, nothing appeared in the local or national press, and only one line was in an English paper. Were the Scottish media too embarrassed?

I thought that my world had come to an end in 2004 when Joyce died after a long illness. Although we were separated we still met every day when I walked her dog and when she was dying in hospital I broke down and sobbed so much that I was upsetting the other visitors and patients and had to leave. Joyce and I never had to say we loved each other because we knew that without saying it, but we were incompatible as a married couple. She wanted the steady life with a fixed routine and I wanted excitement and change and couldn't stand the same thing for too long.

I went for a holiday to Spain after Joyce died. I had met two Scots Mark and Molly from Edinburgh in Barcelona who let me park my van in their café's parking lot in Santa Ponsa. I did this for years and paid them 200 Euros' a year for the privilege, but then the police stopped it. This was a pity because I liked driving on to the ferry at Rosyth then on to Zebrugge and down through Belgium, Holland, France and Spain. I could happily live in a van or a camper van for the rest of my life. This must be the tinker in me, happy to travel; see new places, and meet new people.

I continued to protest and at Christmas 2008 I went to the Vatican City and did my protest there and distributed 200 leaflets in Italian telling the people about the injustice of my case.

In early December 2008 I had also taken part in the “Silent Walk For Justice” which is organised by two Swedish ladies. This demonstration is for those who feel that Scottish justice has failed them and consists of a silent walk down the Royal Mile to the Holyrood Parliament where candles are lit and a vigil is held. I also did this in 2009 and it makes me ashamed to be Scottish to say that on both walks the Justice Secretary, Kenny McAskill has refused to meet the marchers.

God willing I will be on the march in 2010. I will never give up. I will never give in. There are times when I think that my life may be in danger. I know how strong these people are and the hold they have over so many. But my protests and this book are not only for me. They are for all the other innocent men and women whose lives were destroyed by a corrupt and sinister clique.

Of course my protests and demonstrations against the Masonic order and its influence in the police and the justice system have made me enemies, especially in the police. In May 2010 I was sitting inside my flat in Glasgow one day when a knock came to the door; it was two policemen and they asked me to come to the local, Stewart Street police station. I asked them what it was in connection with but they said it was about the tax disc on a previous van I owned. I went with them and once there was asked to wait in a cell which was locked. I waited in that cell overnight without any explanation and the next day was taken by private security contractors to court. After waiting for some time I was told by a policeman that I was not needed and was free to go. This was 28^{1/2} hours after first being detained. I only got to see a lawyer, a Mr Mitchell—who could not tell me anything about why I was there—26 hours after being detained. I am still waiting for Mr Mitchell to keep his promise to get back to me.

I have taken this matter up with the Citizens Advice Bureau and when I tell people about this incident they always say that I must be angry. Well in a way I am but in another way I am satisfied that I must be getting my message through to somebody. If they need to resort to locking up a 71 year old man to defend

my attacks on freemasonry in the justice system then I think that I am winning. What kind of people are they?

For some years now I have regularly attended the Wayside Club, a drop in centre for the vulnerable in Glasgow, which is run by the RC Sisters of Mary. I have made many friends there and I attend mass there every Sunday night after attending Church of Scotland services in the morning. I also attend the Salvation Army Hostel in South Portland Street, Gorbals where I have many friends amongst the staff.

I have a website at: <http://sidgallagher.com/> detailing my experiences and I publish short stories on it.

If they want me to stop, they will have to kill me. Sid Gallagher will be a thorn in their side until the day he dies. If anyone reading this book wants to see me they should come to the Clyde Shopping Centre in Clydebanks as I will be there every Saturday demonstrating with placards and handing out leaflets between the hours of 2pm and 4pm (other commitments allowing) till the day I die.

I am getting on with my life now and I have made up my mind that I am not taking this shit from the lice that have wrongly put so many men in prison for 20 years, 25 years, and 17 years and so on. When they are found out to be liars, they retire on health grounds. Well, I will be fighting these scum till the day I die.

When people ask me how my case is going, I tell them that my sister Delia and Sidney McKechnie died in the Clydebanks Blitz and my father was killed in the blackout and they were supposed to have died in a war for a better world, well where is the better world? My country Scotland is run by fucking legal gangsters and I am not going to rest till I get justice from these bastards. They can shove their Queens Police Medals, their MBE's and knighthoods up their lying arses.

God only knows how I am raging inside of me, yet in my early teen years I still thought that life was fair and that you only reaped what you sowed. I was soon to find out in later years that the sly bastards in life got on by being sly. The only good thing is that most of the real sly bastards that I was involved with in my teen years died young. Yippee.

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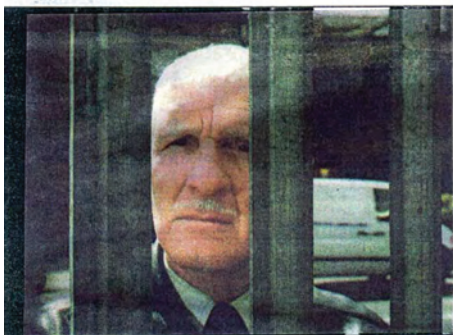
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I am innocent!

Murder bid man's claim after six-year jail sentence



OUT of jail: Sidney Gallagher is fighting to clear his name.

EXCLUSIVE: By GARY FANNING

SIDNEY Gallagher insisted he will fight until the day he dies to clear his name . . . after spending time in jail for the attempted murder of a Dalmatian man.

Gallagher, formerly of 21 Gran Street, Whitecrock, pleaded

his innocence with a protest outside the High Court sitting in Glasgow on Friday.

He used several placards and paintings to highlight his own horror story and a number of other injustices throughout the world.

Mr Gallagher's case, which he claims was a miscarriage of justice, will be looked at again by the Scottish Criminal Review Board.

He was found guilty of the attempted murder of John Gillespie by a jury at the High Court in Glasgow on July 10, 1998. He was sentenced to six years at Barbour Prison but only served three years.

But he said: "I'm innocent and I was convicted by the High Court. It was a miscarriage of justice and I'm angry and bitter. I will never give up the fight to clear my name until the day I die."

All I want is justice. I've been wronged."

Continued on page 3

Girl 'serious' after car accident

A SEVEN-year-old girl was seriously injured after being knocked down in Knightswood on Friday.

The youngster was walking in Linton Avenue at the golf club just after 4.30pm when she was hit by a grey Ford Escort van.

She was rushed by ambulance to Yorkhill Hospital where her condition is described as serious but stable.

She is being treated for head injuries in the intensive care unit and is on a ventilator.

It is understood her condition is not

life threatening. The driver of the van was shaken but unhurt.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or who has any information is asked to contact Constable Ian Ferguson at the road policing complex on 0141 552 6456.

Continued on page 3

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I'm innocent, says jailed man

From page 1

Mr Gallagher said that memories of being jailed still haunt him. "I went to the High Court thinking the charge would be dropped - but I got six years instead," he said. "I'm angry because the police were supposed to be protecting me - but they were protecting Gillespie."

"I felt that the whole system was

The court found that Gallagher savagely beat Gillespie on the head and shoulder with a hatchet outside the Boatmakers Club in Clydebank.

But Gallagher claimed it was self-defence as Gillespie came "like a man to hit him with a six-foot wide fence".

He said: "The only two people who never saw the fence were the two policemen. Four

unfairly treated at the High Court so the judge summed up one-and-a-half pages to the prosecution's case - but only mentions one paragraph for my defence."

Gallagher, who has two sons and two daughters, has separated from his wife and has now moved away from the Clydebank area.

Sid was no sooner out of jail than he was protesting outside of the High Court in Glasgow. The local paper ran this front page article on his fight to clear his name, which he said would carry on "until the day I die."



Top photo shows Sid in 2003 demo outside of Temporary Scottish Parliament Committee Rooms, King George IV Bridge Edinburgh. Bottom Left shows Sid's 2004 demo "Crucified By Scottish Legal System" again on K G IV bridge but further from MSPs entrance after agreement with police. Bottom Right Sid is at vigil at Holyrood Parliament after taking part in "Silent Walk for Justice" in 2009.



Top Left shows Sid at St Giles Cathedral the start point for the 2009 Silent Walk For Justice. Top Right, this photo is taken outside the “World’s End Pub” on the walk down the Royal Mile, a name that is associated with another famous Scots miscarriage of justice. Bottom photo shows Sid at the candlelight vigil outside the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood.



Joyce and Sid in 1984 only days before he left for New Zealand.



Joyce is buried with her parents in Clydebank and Sid visits her grave every week.



Some photos taken when Sid accepted the kind invitation from the current owners of Duneira to visit. Sid took the opportunity to view his favourite beauty spot and pay his respects at the grave of his father in Garelohead churchyard.

Post Script

For those of you who have managed to wade through this book I would like to try and read your minds and answer the obvious question that you the reader must ask yourselves.

QUESTION. Why should this man be angry; he is a violent thug who admits as much and deserves jail?

ANSWER. I could have written this story and glossed over any drunkenness or violence on my part and only concentrated on my good points and charitable work. I chose to tell it like it was, violence and all, but any violence I have carried out in my life was against my peers. Those like me, who when drunk or sober would think it normal behaviour to correct any perceived wrongs, or defend themselves with their fists, feet and head.

They say in America that there is a code of the West and this is about having guns and the right to defend your property and family with guns if threatened. There is also a code of the West in Scotland and that is the code that I practiced since I was a wee boy at school. If attacked I would defend myself.

If I was having a square go I would stick by the rules and not use any weapon, but if attacked with a weapon and in fear of your life you would be mad not to use whatever came to hand, and this is what I did when Jake Gillespie, cornered and attacked me with a large steel metal gate to my severe injury.

In my early years especially I lived a drunken and violent life, but when I was found guilty of breach of the peace or assault I took my punishment. When I was brought before David Granger I had been tee total for twenty five years. During these years I had avoided trouble had been involved in voluntary work with various human rights groups as well as fund raising for charitable organisations. Maybe I should have been punished more often in my wild past, but that does not justify having me serve two terms in prison for crimes that I did not commit when I had turned my life around.

David Grainger is a member of the Board of the Scottish Justices Association and on their website he is described as someone who has always been in authority. I have always defied and rebelled against authority and Grainger would have instinctively hated me and what I represented, and that feeling was mutual. But he is supposed to be above such feelings in his role as a Justice.

Maybe Grainger hated what I stood for and saw in me the wild and independent spirit that he secretly admired and wanted to crush.

Maybe the Clydebanks police, the Procurator Fiscal's office and the trial Judge Lady Cosgrove wanted to make an example of this unconventional man who had glued himself to the dock in Clydebanks Magistrates Court to protest the injustice he had suffered. I don't know, but I do know that I have been treated unfairly and I will not accept it. I deserve fair treatment. Justice from the state, not revenge against me. I intend to protest against my unfair treatment till the day I die.

*Sydney McKechnie Gallagher,
June 2010*