

WARTIME WEEK

Jack Brown

In shirt and shorts, instead of R.A.F. Blue, and with a 7 day leave pass in pocket, we boarded the train at Montrose, en route for St. Fillans, on Loch Earn.

With two light weights, and two children we were off to Loch Earn to spend our precious few days there, away from R.A.F. Montrose and all the reminders of war in the year 1942. A change of train at Glen Eagles, and we boarded the single steam coach which then ran to St. Fillans, the highlight for the children being to keep a look-out for the gaily painted 'Dragon of Strathearn', which can still be seen by the side of the track.

Arrival at St. Fillans station saw three years old Ann strapped into her saddle seat behind mother, four years old Ian sat on his saddle on the cross bar of Father's bike, then off we set over the bridge, past the golf course, and along the loch side until we reached the FIFE D.A. HUT at Coilmore on Ardvorlich estate. Here a warm welcome awaited us from old friends Mary MacDonald and her father, and of course a noisy welcome from Tweed the old collie, but a suspicious circling from the young pup whom we were meeting for the first time.

The days simply flew by, spent building harbours in the loch, a run to Lochearnhead and back, also a complete circle of Loch Earn itself, down to St. Fillans to buy our 'rations', and, this a highlight for the kids, Mr. Rose, the village painter, let us have his rowing-boat on the loch for a full day, when we had a picnic on the opposite shore and explored the little island out in the middle to find it was an old clan burial ground. A run back to visit the 'Dragon' once again, and let the two wee ones climb on its back for a photograph still talked about today. The Dragon himself must still be seen by all Fife D.A. members who pass that way, and was even mentioned by 'Wayfarer' in one of his books.

One long and glorious day we were able to reach the Braes of Balquhidder and visit Rob Roy's grave and so add a wee history lesson to Ian's knowledge. A walk up the old drove road but all too soon it was time to pack up, pedal down to St. Fillans and our wee train back to Montrose to book in before the all too familiar 23.59 hours.

However the memory lingers on with lashings of cream, honey, fresh milk and unlimited fresh eggs (in war time!) all four were bucked up no end, ready for another stint of R.A.F. duty – and all due to being members of the Fife D.A. and all that it meant.

Thanks a million from the Brown family.