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LAST week's picture of horses working in front of the Manse at Monymusk brought an almost instant response from Mr Duncan Downie, our local joiner who has submitted the picture this week.

He tells me that both were taken by local photographer G. Cruickshank, at a ploughing match around the mid 1920's. Although he is unable to identify the two ploughmen from last week, he has given full details on the above picture.

The horse nearest the camera is Meg, a mare belonging to James Philip of Sunnyside, Kennay. The other horse is Bud, belonging to John Lyon of Leschange, who is the bearded gentleman behind.

John Lyon is carrying a similar "staff" to the mystery ploughman in last week's picture. In fact, this is a metal straightedge used by ploughmen to set up the plough before starting work.

The figure at the plough is George Lyon, son of John, and a noted ploughman in his day. At the time the picture was taken he was employed at Sunnyside as horseman to James Philip, who is pictured with his pipe in his mouth between father and son.

As we can see, Meg is all spruced up in the best of finery and groomed "up to the nines". George Lyon not only competed in the ploughing class but also in the harness section. The harness was acquired from a Mr William Low of Bonnyton in Udry.

Duncan says "Only those who have been involved, can picture the scene which would have taken place in the stable at Sunnyside on the night previous to the match, as the harness was polished and cleaned in preparation for the big day. The metalwork shone like silver, the leatherwork had a shine to match any army sergeant's boots."

Duncan is meantime searching for a poem, written by Ian Tait, of Downhill, who describes another ploughing match in Monymusk around 1948-49.

I hope he is successful and look forward to sharing it with our Kennay and Monymusk readers. My thanks to Duncan for providing this lovely insight into those long-gone days.

CHURCH HALL

You will remember that last week I wrote about John Morgan who has just retired from farming at Tombeg, Monymusk. He has been an elder at Blairdaff Church for 37 years; his wife Ella is also an elder and son Jim serves on the Congregation Board.

They and their minister, Rev. Eric G. Milton will be pleased with the news this week that full planning permission has been granted for the erection of a Church Hall at Blairdaff.

The application first came before

recommended for refusal on the grounds that the design of the proposed building was not sympathetic with its surroundings, or the setting adjacent to the church which is a Grade C listed building.

As the permission is for a limited period of five years the committee agreed with the recommendation of the Director of Planning that full planning permission be granted.

MONYMUSK TRIANGLE

I stay in the Monymusk area for my next item which concerns "The Monymusk Triangle" on Bennachie which forms an important pedestrian access route from the south side of the range via the Heather Brig and the Mither Tap to Pittodrie and Oyne.

Gordon District Planning Committee this week discussed an application referred by the Forestry Commission from Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk Estate to plant trees on the 24.5 hectares of land.

It is proposed to plant 23.3 hectares of sitka spruce and 1.2 hectares of broadleaves. There appears to be no indication of any plans to retain the main path from the Mither Tap to the Forest road leading to Esson's car park and to Donview car park. A two metre high deer fence is suggested which will clearly restrict public access.

The Bailleurs of Bennachie were consulted and they have strongly urged the District Council to oppose the proposal. They feel tree planting on the triangle would harm the appearance of the landscape as it removes a valuable break in the forest which gives an open vista of the Mither Tap from Heather Brig.

They also feel that closing of the important and historic pedestrian access route would cause conflict with the public; that burning of heather for ground preparation would lead to destruction of both regenerating Scots Pine and older trees near the Ginsie Burns; that extending planting above the existing upper limit would produce a very stark outline and they have informed the committee that as recently as March, 1987 they received assurance from Sir Archibald that there were no proposals to plant this land in the next five years.

The Countryside Commission and North East Mountain Trust have advised that the scheme is unacceptable and Grampian Regional Council have added their own views on safeguarding the route to Mither Tan and Heather Brig.

The District Council intends to register a formal objection to the scheme and I would like to quote a few lines from one of the letters of objection which sums up the importance of Bennachie to all of us. Mr Hugh R. Spencer of Westhill writes - "Scientifically this part of the walking approach to the Mither Tap is extraordinary. In certain weather and sunlight conditions it is possible that this short stretch provides one of the most beautiful scenes in Scotland, and perhaps the world - and I say this from a very wide experience.

"The previous forestry planners must have left the "triangle" unplanted in recognition of the extraordinary vista from what is now its apex. Indeed they actually enhanced the immense beauty of the scene by the creation of the triangle and the random planting of isolated individual trees within it.

"There are days when the beauty of the triangle itself and the view from the apex are breathtaking. The setting sun on a clear autumn, winter or spring day, suffuses the whole in gold - the green of the isolated trees contrasting with the heather, with sometimes the red berries of the rowan - and the eye is led naturally up the free lines on the right of the triangle to the "spire" of the Tap.

"To approve the current application to plant it over would be a grievous loss - and for little return."

BURNS SUPPERS

Burns Night is with us again and two celebrations of the birth of Robert Burns are being held in the village. The Public Hall Trust is holding a Supper and Dance tomorrow night in the hall. Chairman for the evening is to be Leslie McKay; James Brown will give the Immortal Memory; Anne Findlay will Address the Haggis; Donald Clark will propose the Toast to the Lassies and Anne Pearson, Muriel Gratton and Isabel Imrie will reply. Our young local poet Robert Brown will pipe in the Haggis and Charlie Esson will provide the music for the dance.

On Monday evening the Woman's Guild are holding their own Burns Evening.

Their event is to be an informal "Evening with Burns". Jim Emslie will sing, Mrs Isabel Dowds to recite, the Scottish Country Dance team will perform and Parish Minister Dr Ian Forbes, now fully recovered from his recent illness will give some readings of Burns' work. He has also been speaking on NorthSound Radio all this week at the end of each day's programmes.

YOUNG POET

I end Monymusk 1933, who of Tombeg the front of the The O... right) - J... George James S... Rainnie, E... Edith M... Stewart, Doreen Bunty Tr... row - El... Leslie So... Fyfe, El... Elsie Rai... row boys... (Rowbar...

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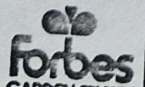
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SEED POTATOES NOW AVAILABLE

Forbes Garden



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The application first came before the Planning Committee on December 8 where it was decided to defer a decision until a site visit could be made. It was originally proposed to erect a single storey timber building comprising a small, pitched roof hall, with a flat roofed extension encompassing kitchen, toilets and storeroom. An amended plan incorporates a pitched roof over the kitchen and store-areas, which leaves only a small portion of flat roof on the north and east elevations.

The application was initially

Styles A-Head

by JULIA & GAIL
 (Formerly of Elizabeth Anne's)

Mobil...

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YOUNG POET

Our young local poet Karen

...which have never been occupied. On the Scottish Special estate at Kembhill Park there are four two-bedroomed houses and one with three bedrooms.

At the other end of the village four houses with between two and five bedrooms await new owners and also a large house on Parkhill Road.

There are two houses and a flat for sale on Aquithe Road; two flats in Kendal Road; one house on Paradise Road; three houses on Victoria Terrace; one on Grove Road; one on Bridge Road; one on the Horner Road; two at Dalmadilly; one at Craigeary; one at Nether Aquithe and one at North Aquithe.

Just outside Kemnath there is a bungalow for sale at East Blairdaff and in Monymusk, Millbank and Sauchen a total of twenty-two properties have the familiar signs outside, or have registered with a solicitor.

At Kintore thirty-two houses have gone on the market and there are sixty-one in the Alford area.

These figures obviously reflect the slump in the oil business which has had a considerable effect on the lives of people in the North-east. We can only hope that the situation will begin to improve during 1988 and all house-hunters and sellers will be able to solve all the problems that have beleaguered the house market in past months.

1933 PUPILS

I end with a photo of the pupils of Monymusk School taken around 1933, which includes John Morgan of Tombeg who is seated far right in the front row.

The others are: Back row (left to right) - John Sims, Mike Robertson, George Tocher, James Thomson, James Sorrie, Bill Sangster, John Rainnie, and Alex Hadden. 2nd row - Edith Moir, Hilda Marshall, Fanny Stewart, Elsie Duffus, ? Barron, Doreen Dempster, Clara Clark, Buntly Troup, Kirsty Anderson. 3rd row - Elsie Riddell, Helen Dunn, Leslie Souter, Lily Anderson, Hilda Fyfe, Edith Hall, Margaret Fraser, Elsie Rainnie, Buntly Sangster. Front row boys: James Sanderson, Leslie Urquhart, Henry Tocher, Peter Donald, Jan Riddell and John Morgan.



9/91