# Ellon Inner Wheel

### **Newsletter**

#### **District Rally**

On 30 May seven members of Ellon Inner Wheel set off bright and not too early to the District 1 Rally in Forfar. Thanks to the AWPR we had a straightforward drive down, avoiding most of the rain, and arrived in Forfar in good time for the proceedings to begin. We were however grateful to have Joyce with us to help navigate to the Royal Hotel in the centre of the town. We were piped into the hall by a member of Forfar pipe band and welcomed by various members of the Forfar Club. Mingling over welcome drinks gave us the opportunity to meet up with old friends: Susan Ramsden who was a member of Ellon IW for a couple of years before moving down to Galashiels. She is now District Chair of District 2. Another familiar face was Mary Berstan of the Banff Club, former District Chair and another good friend of Ellon IW. And of course we got a chance to catch up Marjorie Duncan, a founder member of this club who moved down to Stirling to be closer to family a few years ago.

Then came the formal proceedings with a warm welcome from Jean Hale and some remarks from several distinguished guests, including the President of Rotary District 1010 and the



President of Forfar Rotary who had provided the welcome drinks. There were several representatives from other Districts, from the far south of England to across the sea in Ireland - a real tribute to the importance of Inner Wheel in this country. A special guest was the newly elected Provost of Angus. One sad note was the absence of Heather Sheerin, a member of the Inverness Club and President of the Association of IW Clubs Great Britain and Ireland. She had been battling ill health for a few years and since the Rally we have received

# **Summer 2025**

the sad news that she has passed away.

A delicious lunch followed and with it the opportunity to talk to the other ladies at our tables.



Judging by the noise level in the room we all got on really well. Although we come from all over the country it is amazing how many links there are between us. We might gather as strangers but we

part as friends.

After lunch, a roll call of members and an address from Heather Sheerin delivered by Association

International Service Chairman Julie Ramsay. Although she couldn't be there in person we were obviously in her thoughts.



Then votes of thanks,

some photographs, some hugs and back to the cars. Fortunately it wasn't raining too heavily! We made it home in good time, thanks to our drivers Heather and Doris. It was a really good day, full of fun and fellowship. For those who haven't been to a District gathering it is well worth the effort to get a closer understanding of this great organisation we are part of.

#### **Candle of Friendship**

A Candle of Friendship A Candle of Light A Candle of Warmth Burning Bright

A Candle of Hope
A Candle of Peace
May our Candle Never Cease
To Symbolise Our Wish for You
Fellowship and Friendship
All Night Through



Kathryn Yarsley IW Club of Wednedbury

#### **Ellon Rotary Club Community Awards**

At the end of May the Rotary Club of Ellon distributed their annual Community grants. But

also on that day our very own Margaret Gifford was awarded a Community Award in recognition of her support of Shammah Children's Home in Malaysia.

Margaret first became involved in supporting Shammah when she and Bruce spent our winters

in Malaysia for a number of years. She raises

been raised over the last five years.





money by selling items she sews at home and to date she has raised £22000, with £16000 having

#### Shetland

After a cancelled flight of over

had a time

30 hours, Roy, Tracy and I finally arrived on Shetland. We wonderful exploring

some of Tracy's favourite places on the island, as well as

other areas, museums etc. The highlight for me, was getting pretty close to the puffins at Sumburgh Head. We also took 2 ferries to visit the most

northerly gin distillery in

the uk, (Roy was driving that day). Then back in Lerwick



tour the next day. Courtesy transport meant no one was driving!

All in all, it was a lovely family

time together making memories. Shetland is a beautiful island and we plan to go back, as we still have a lot to explore—and the weather was kind to us which was a bonus!.



#### Clevedon IW Club

I had a sad notification a few days ago from my opposite number in our sister club of Clevedon in District 10. As Session 2024/25 draws to a close they find themselves unable to fill the key posts of President, Secretary and Treasurer so have reluctantly decided to disband the Club. We wish all the members well in whatever the future holds for them

#### **VE Day and Wartime Memories.**

I was 4 when the War broke out, and living in Clydebank, very close to the Singer Sewing Machine factory.

When the air raids started in Britain, we had an Anderson Shelter in the garden and my Dad who was a bricklayer built a baffle wall around the shelter - a brick wall for more protection. I had a gas mask in a bright yellow tin on a cord to carry around when out and about.

Just before my 6th birthday on 13 April 1941 Clydebank was bombed. On the morning of the 14th when we came out of the shelter our house was ok although an incendiary bomb had gone through the roof and set fire to my bed but my Dad managed to put the fire out. My Mum, Grandma and myself managed to get to Glasgow and got a bus to Galston in Ayrshire to relatives. However on the night of the 14th, when my Dad and Grandpa came out of the shelter, lucky to be alive, everything was demolished.

My Mum and Dad eventually got a house in Glasgow but I stayed in Galston until 1944. I spent VE Day on the island of Arran. After a street party we watched fireworks over the water. Although still young it was a great relief the war was over.

Morag Macpherson

On the evening of VE Day 80 years ago I was 8 and remember being with my Mum and elder sister at a huge bonfire at Gallow hill at the top of the Tuach Hill Kintore. My Dad was in the navy. Lots of hugs and celebrations.

(Didn't really know much about the war then but it is still a vivid memory)

Doreen Davidson

Having been born in the farmhouse at Highlands, Newmachar in 1941, for me VE Day in May 1945 came a wee bit early for developing any real recall of what must have bee a truly memorable event. I understand there was a celebration in the village but I wasn't there, presumably neither were my parents being hands-on owners of a dairy farm. However what I do remember was the period that led up to D Day on 6th June 1944 when Allied Forces landed in France and commenced their

struggle to reach Berlin and so win the victory in Europe and give us VE Day.

I have clear memories of scores of khaki clad soldiers regularly arriving on the farm by trucks and motor bikes as well as on foot. They were moving around rural Aberdeenshire building bodily fitness with long route marches as well as perfecting the logistics of moving lots of military equipment. The lucky ones (officers?) slept in the barn which was full of straw but the rest just bedded down where they could.

Where my wartime memories become very clear are with the arrival of prisoners of war who from their camp at Monymusk were trucked out to do farmwork. Later they came to stay in the farmhouse and I got to know some quite well, probably being in my childhood I reminded some of their own families back home. Our first 'boarders' were Italian, Froy, who in the photo has me in his arms and Lazarus. The German POWs who followed were more serious and did not waste time amusing a child.



Victory in Europe, VE Day, did not end the Second World War. The Japanese fought on until August. My only relative who was involved in the actual fighting was taken prisoner in the Fall of Singapore in 1942 and spent the next three and a half years suffering starvation, disease and the sadistic brutality of his captors. He survived, but only just.

I end on a sombre note with a reminder that

Thousands of his colleagues did not. Come the 15th of August, VJ Day, spare a thought for them.

Charlie Burgess

#### **Another wartime story**

My story does not have a lot to do with VE Day apart from as a reminder that for much of the population the fact that the joy that War in Europe was coming to an end was tainted for many by the loss of family members and friends. This was true in the case of my family as my cousin, my father's nephew, was killed in 1944 in the Battle for Normandy. I had always known about this although he died several years before I was born, but all I knew was his name, Jim Hutchison, the same as my brother's name following the Scottish custom of naming firstborn grandsons for their paternal grandfathers.

We had spent numerous holidays in France as the boys were growing up but even I realised that trailing round French War cemeteries was no fun for teenage boys. But on our first holiday after they had gone off to university I decided to try and track down my cousin's grave. I asked my Mum where he had been killed and she told me Vire, but by that time her memory was failing so I wasn't sure how accurate that was.

But it was a place to start. So we set off on our quest, starting at Vire. At that time each war cemetery had a list of those buried there and the names of two adjacent cemeteries so we spent an afternoon looking for answers. As the afternoon drew to a close my rather weary husband said "ok, we'll check Bayeux, then head back to the hotel". That flicked a switch in my memory. As a student I had spent a summer as an au pair in Normandy. My host had taken me to some of the landing beaches and the Bayeux Tapestry and I remember my Dad saying that was where his nephew was buried. Within five minutes we had found him. Although I never knew him it was an emotional experience standing at his grave, probably the first family member ever to be there. He was killed on 3rd August 1944 at the age of 21, the age my older son was at the time.

Obviously I shared my findings with my family. About 20 years later my niece posted on Facebook that she was in Bayeux with her daughter's school class of eleven year olds. I sent her a message back saying if she had time, her Dad's cousin was buried in the Military Cemetery there. About five minutes later I got a reply with a photo of the grave. But what had been an academic exercise now become much more real to the kids as they all gathered round their classmate's grandfather's cousin's

grave. The following year the class teacher asked if they could visit his grave again and many took little crosses with messages on them. We were in Normandy later that summer and the crosses with their touching messages were still there.

Then came Covid and that came to an end.

But the story did not end there. At the end of 2021 I got a message from a cousin in America. At that time she had an extensive family tree on Ancestry which included Jim Hutchison. She had had a message from a gentleman in Hampshire who was in charge of the Roll of Honour of Hampshire Constabulary. There was only one person on it about whom they had no information at all - Jim Hutchison. Could she help? My cousin knew nothing at all about him so she passed the challenge on to me. I knew that my uncle, Jim's father, had been badly wounded in WW1, been invalided out of the army and had moved south to Aldershot to work with Army Welfare. But I played a hunch and looked for Jim's birth in his father's home town of Motherwell where our grandmother was District Midwife and who had delivered most of her grandchildren. I did indeed find his birth there. I also had a rummage through some old family photos and found a photo of Jim with his parents and one on his own. He looked about 15, but then he was only 21 when he was killed. I sent the information I had gleaned to my contact in Hampshire. He confirmed Jim had been a police cadet before he was called up for war. He also used the information I had given him to get Jim's service records and sent me copy of them. These confirmed he had been killed by a direct hit on the tank he was driving.

2024 was the 80th Anniversary of D Day and we found ourselves back in Normandy. There were lots of very poignant memorials of the Battle of Normandy including one at Ver-sur-Mer just above the Landing Beaches in which all the names of those under British Command killed in the Normandy Campaign were named, including my cousin.

When I got home I had a look at his details on the website which included a photograph - the one of the smiling boy I had sent to Hampshire. I felt I had done a wee bit to keep his story alive.

#### **Therapets**

The Therapet service was started in 1984 by Canine Scotland in the hope that the dogs would help to heal adults and young children who were in hospital following surgery or in palliative care. In order to become a volunteer the handler and the dog both need to be assessed for compatibility. I also needed 2 character references, a PVG and disclosure Scotland. We passed!!

Ruby is an 11 year old Labrador who retired from field work when she was 8 years old. She came to live with me in Ellon just after her 8th birthday. This wasn't without its difficulties! Ruby had spent 8 years sleeping, eating etc etc in an outside kennel (with other 16 dogs) so she was unfamiliar with a house and all its accoutrements. She was very scared of the hoover and the tv but we worked hard and we settled into a routine which suited us both.

We were assessed for the Therapet service mid 2023 and our first assignment was by choice, Roxburgh House in Aberdeen. I am familiar with the service Roxburgh provides and I know many of the staff members there from the time my husband was a patient in 2021. Ruby has a very calm and gentle nature and she brightened many days of the patients who were terminally ill. The look of sheer pleasure on their faces when they saw Ruby was testament to her charm. We worked at Roxburgh for 18 months. We were then asked to visit Auchtercrag Care Home and Ythanvale Care Home. This was very rewarding as many of the older folks had dogs when they were younger and had many stories to tell and reminisce about.

Our latest challenge has been very worthwhile. We were asked to be the reading dog team for the pupils at the base of Ellon Academy. The theory behind this is pupils come to read to the dog who they think doesn't understand. A member of staff is on hand to

help with the bigger words. We have enjoyed this task very much and Ruby knows now she gets biscuits!

She is a  $\bigstar \bigstar \Leftrightarrow \text{that's for sure is oor Ruby!}$ 

Maureen



#### Storyworth



A couple of years ago, for my birthday, my older son in Australia sent me a subscription to Storyworth, an American organisation which sends a question for you to answer every week. At the end of the year they will assemble these answers into a book. Or as my

younger son commented "He's given you homework!" I think the rationale behind it was to give my four Australian grandchildren a deeper understanding of my life and how things had changed over the years, the kind of questions which children would normally ask if they saw their grandparents for more than a brief month every eighteen months or so.

Some of the questions were straightforward, like "How was your life different growing up, to that of your grandchildren?" That was easy, no mobile phones, one black and white channel on tv and no remote - if you wanted to switch off you had to walk over to the set and press a button - few toys and I caught the tail end of rationing. I even managed to find a couple of photos of Andy Pandy and the Flowerpot Men for illustration. Some questions were more difficult, like relationships with parents and the one which nearly stumped me "What advice would I give my grandchildren?" I thought that one was a real waste of time as they were unlikely to take notice of any advice anyway!

But I could include photos of my parents and grandparents, of trips I had taken, including a school trip to the East German Border where there were still watchtowers manned by armed soldiers. The fact that warning shots were fired at us was probably the most dramatic bit about the whole thing! I included photos of our house in Ellon and the boys when they were little. All in all it was my life's story.

But the year passed, and another year of editing and screening. I had no idea how pedantic my son could be, but I guess he wanted it perfect for his kids. In the end a line was drawn under it. But imagine the thrill a couple of weeks later when a parcel arrived from Storyworth, my stories in print. With three copies hardly a best seller, but still a thrill.

## Our Inner Wheel Year



