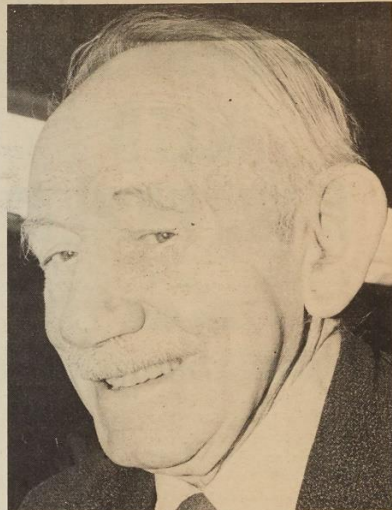


# WITHOUT THESE WALLS

Welcome to the first instalment of Brig's journey beyond the walls of our little spaceship, beyond the bizarre monastery of depravity and Education, out, out and into THE WORLD!

Part one takes us no further than Bridge of Allan, where our timorous reporters stopped to talk to some gentlemen who had the courtesy to pass the time of day with "junior" citizens.



The time is any weekday afternoon, the venue Bridge of Allan Youth and Community Centre. Some fifty retired men, of widely different backgrounds and profession, are engaged in the fine art of indoor bowling.

Most take an active part in the sport, but some prefer to spectate, and to join in the apportioning of praise or blame. One, a retired Blacksmith and native of Bridge of Allan, said that he attended the meetings regularly because "The patter's awfully good, and half the lies they tell are true".

Within a short time of our arrival shyness had evaporated both on our part and on the part of the club members and, come tea-time, we found ourselves the centre of attention:

Member: What do you study then?

Brig Boy: Er, hem, Philosophy.

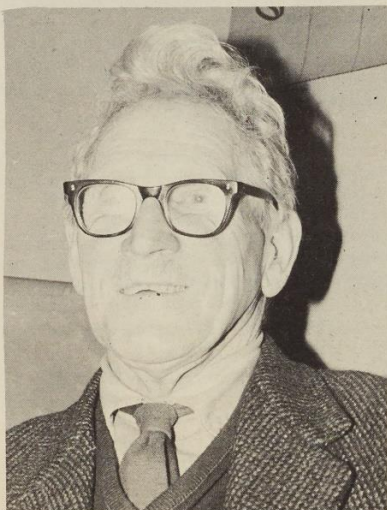
Member: Oh yes, I'm an ethical hedonist myself, you know. (Winks).

And then followed a complete breakdown of academic life, including the bold assertion that "That sociology subject is useless, absolutely useless" - a point which met with universal approbation.

The University proved an irresistible subject, as did Education, which was defined to me thus: *An educated man is a man who thinks others' thinks, and an intelligent man is a man who thinks his own thinks*".

The University was generally considered to be a Good Thing, of potential benefit to the community, etc. Several, however, complained (?) that they "never see nor hear" of students and a former postman, whose round once included Airthrey Castle as a privately-owned residence, said that he "Would like to see more of students at work and at play".

Surely the sudden appearance of the University had some adverse effects, or at least wrought great changes in the community? But no, - here we met with a staunch refusal to criticise, and a kind of reluctant stoicism: times



change, of course, they said, and sometimes it seems that "Tolerance is fast disappearing - there's not enough interest in others"; but none seemed willing to see the University in such a light, and were happy, rather, that it had such a beautiful environment in which to nurture great fruits of knowledge.

Many of the members were familiar with the artistic offerings of the McRobert Centre, and seemed only mildly alarmed that you "Tend to trip over students in the foyer". I was at one stage questioned upon the meaning of recent Drummond Foundation Lectures,

and when I confessed my absence from these events was met not so much with reproof but with surprise that I could bear to miss such fine occasions.

Of course there were the inevitable, well-mannered reproaches on the subject of the Queen's visit. The general opinion was that "As good Royalists we'll never forgive you" and yet as good gentlemen they obviously did forgive us, and seemed anxious to square the blame firmly on the shoulders of some strange, historical generation of dissidents.

One gentleman turned out to be an ex-employee of the Department of Health and Social Security in Stirling, and but recently retired. He began vigorously to expound that students oughtn't to be entitled to benefits, but was clamoured down by outraged voices, whose owners were keen to remark that drawing pensions is no different from drawing Social Security, and the ethical hedonist in particular was keen to affirm that nowadays you were forced to get what you could, from where you could.

And so the afternoon was whiled away in memories of times when "They used to come out on the grass up here - in evening suits - and play bowls, but that's all away now", with chat and with posing ("Are you taking a picture of me because I'm one on the handsome ones?").

In the end we realised that the tables had been turned somewhat, and that we had all been interviewed in detail. But then I just guess they're old hands.



**Chat: Allan, Mary & Nick**  
**Pictures: Alastair**