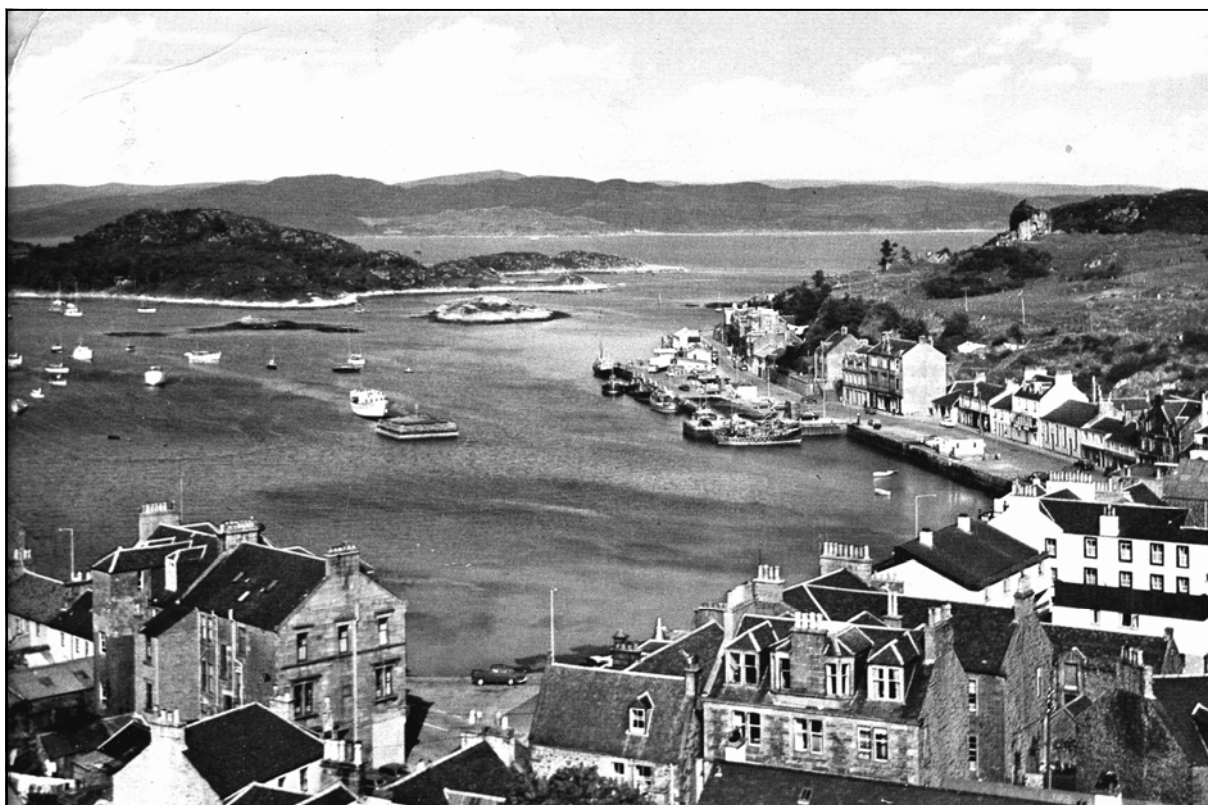


Tarbert

Loch fyne

Tarbert has a special place in our lives. It is the home of our mother, and of hers. It is the playground of my childhood with memories of my brothers and sister, cousins, aunts and uncles and friends. We went there every year and I continued to return to visit after my girls had left Scotland. After I left Scotland, and when I came home on holiday, I would still visit Tarbert.

It is a place we shared with our friends. Sometimes we would take friends with us, and when we got on the steamer, there were always people we had met on previous trips. My grandchildren, none of whom live in Scotland, have even visited Tarbert, such is the strong family pull all these years later. I wanted to put some pictures, postcards and stories here, as Tarbert holds so many fond memories from throughout my life.



I remember going to Tarbert from when I was about five years old. We would get up in the morning, have breakfast together then we would all do our own thing. It was a very safe place then and it probably still is now.

When I was young, I would go with Mother to her sister Flora's. Her daughter was Nan Easton, and we would play in her garden with Peggie Carmichael, her friend. We were all about the same age. As we grew up, we would go swimming at the white shore. That was the only patch of white sand, along a bit and across from the pier at Tarbert. All the other beaches were pebbles, very sore on the feet! The water was pretty cold, though, so we didn't swim much.

We used to go to town, sometimes just to watch the fishing boats or the boats coming in at the pier. I remember watching the women gutting the fish. It was women that did this, they were not from Tarbert but came from the north of Scotland when the herring were in season. I was fascinated to watch them. I remember the barrels behind them, and they would gut the fish, and did it so skilfully, they didn't even seem to be looking at what they were doing as they tossed the gutted fish into the wooden barrels behind them.

We used to go to the ice cream shop which sold tea and sandwiches and of course, ice cream. It was owned by the only Italian in town, and I remember he was the only Catholic in town as well. There was no Catholic Church in Tarbert, and when he wanted to go to Mass, he had to go to Lochgilphead, the nearest town with a Catholic Church.

In the early days, Mother had to do the cleaning, shopping and cooking for us, but later, we took a cottage with attendance, so she had a lot more time to enjoy her holiday. She spent most of her time catching up with her family and friends. Father would gather his whelks, play bowls, go walking and he would go visiting with Mother. When they went to Aunty Annie's, Father would join Uncle Duncan's fisherman crowd and they would all stand at the corner at the hotel and yak.

They used to hold dances for the tourists and holiday makers in the Soldier's Drill Hall. They did ballroom dancing and Nan, my brother Bobby and I used to go and peep in through the window. Chrissie was a bit older than us, so she had her own older crowd.

We went on holiday in July. Going to Tarbert, we would get dressed up. You got really dressed up to go on holiday! We would walk down to the pier at Broomeilaw, on the north bank of the Clyde, right in the middle of Glasgow. The boys would carry the metal trunks full of our clothes on their heads! We would catch the steamer to Tarbert, which was a good trip and took about 6 hours. Later, we would catch the train from the Central Station to Gourock then catch the steamer, often the St Columbus, to Tarbert. That made the journey a bit shorter, about 5 hours as the steamer stopped at all the piers along the way. In July, the Glasgow Fair was on, and when it finished, some of the rides would come to Tarbert, for the Tarbert Fair, which was fun.

Whenever we arrived in Tarbert, the first thing my father would do was to go to the hill behind "Baluachrach" and fill a few bottles of water from the spring, a natural spring, beautiful water "buchanasoo" and then go down to the beach and gather whelks. He would put them into the spring water, then salt and boil them. You ate them by using a pin to remove the meat. I never much fancied them, but Father loved them!

We stayed at many cottages over the years. Of course, Granny had died by the time I was going on holiday, and their little croft was empty. So we stayed at places like Rocklee House. It was a cottage owned by Mrs McDonald (no relation). It was on the opposite side of Tarbert to Granny's house and the parish church. It was up the hill overlooking the bowling green and the tennis courts. She had a family and they let one half of the house out during holidays and they stayed in the other half. She had a son, Callum Mc Donald. He was a fisherman in Tarbert. My cousin, Annie McDonald, was very fond of him and we thought they would get married. He was a bit of a love rat though, and had another girlfriend, so it was all over and Annie's heart was broken. She never married. At Rocklee, there was a daughter Sarah, and Katie (who moved to Glasgow) and another two sons, Jimmy and Alistair, who was a great pal of Bobby's when we went to Tarbert. They were playing at jumping over a stick one year, and Bobby fell and broke his leg. We all had to head back to Glasgow, where he had to go to the Royal Infirmary to have it seen to.

We stayed at other places like Oriental Cottage, Springside, down near the pier and on just one occasion, Chrissie and I went on holiday to Tarbert

on our own. We stayed at Auntie Annie McAlpine's. Annie was married to Uncle Archie McAlpine. There were five daughters, all older than me, Annie, Bella, Mary, Margaret and Flora. There was also a son, Duncan McAlpine. He was one of Bobby's mates in Tarbert and they used to play bowls together. Auntie Annie's place was at the Quay. You had to go round the back and up the stairs to get in. Auntie Annie used to watch everyone get off the boats at the pier when they arrived in Tarbert. I remember a relative from Glasgow had gone to Tarbert and had seen Auntie Annie at her window and said, "Teenie, I didn't know you were coming to Tarbert" Auntie Annie and my mother were very alike in appearance.

When I was there with Chrissie, some of the young fellows we had met in town earlier in the day were talking up to us at the open window. Duncan clipped (snitched) to Auntie Annie, and we were in big trouble. She knocked on the door, told us to put the window down and be quiet. We couldn't stop giggling and had to cover our mouths to keep quiet! She was very strict, but I suppose she was responsible for us. I couldn't wait to see my mother to get the first word in so I didn't get in trouble. Thank goodness there were no phones!

When we went to Tarbert, we gathered raspberries and brambles but didn't make jam or jelly, we ate them. I remember one time Bobby and I were up the hill past the policeman's house, which at that time was vacant and we spotted some ripe raspberries. We jumped the wall and were having a good feast. I said "Oh Bobby see this one its a beauty". "Oh, is it ?" said a voice, and when we looked up, the policeman was watching us over the wall. I said "Oh Bobby, run" and we went laughing all the way down the hill.

As we all got older the boys didn't always come. They went to the Isle of Man, and Johnny would go off with his camping crowd. It was really Chrissie, Bobby and me.

I remember once, Alec and I had borrowed Uncle Archie's rowboat. We went away round Beaumore Island. The weather turned and it started to get rough. Alec said, "We're never going to make it!" So he dropped me off and I walked across the isthmus. When I got back, Uncle Archie was waiting for us. He had watched the whole thing and was worried about us because he had

noticed a basking shark in the water. Good job we didn't notice it.

After I was married, I still came back, but just on shorter trips, as we had a caravan in Skelmorlie, but we still went often to Tarbert. After Alec died, I would go with Chrissy to Tarbert now and then for the weekend, and we would spend time with Sarah, Flo and Annie McDonald. I always saw Uncle Duncan, but not much of Mary, who lived in his croft after he died. She stayed at home, she didn't go out the house much. Most of the family that married, moved to other places like Glasgow, and Meg Cockburn moved to Rutherglen. Now there are not many people left that I know. Bella McAlpine, Duncan McAlpine's wife and a granddaughter of Annie and Archie McAlpine. I think one of the family is in Flora McAlpine's house too.

I still visited every time I went to Scotland, Tarbert holds a lot of memories, but in the end, it is people that are important, isn't it?



Above: Tarbert, with Bruce Castle in the background

Below: Tarbert, Taken from above Annie McAlpine's House,
near the Castle





Above: Donald, Chrissie, Father, Mother, Jimmy, Agnes, Bobby

Below: Father, Jimmy, Chrissie, Agnes, Donald, Mother and Alec at Tarbert Pier





*Left: Jimmy on the
Steamer to Tarbert*

*Below: Bobby Board-
ing the Steamer*





Above: Donald and Father on board the Steamer

Right: Agnes on the Steamer





Steaming Away



Father Collecting Whelks in Tarbert



Above: Bobby and Pal

*Below: Agnes, Meg,
Baby Jean, Christina
and Chrissie at Tarbert*





Above: Tarbert from the Inverary Road the fishing pier.

Below: Main Street. The Shop in the right foreground is where Dr McMillan had his practice upstairs and where Mother worked for him.



Above: Callum McDonald, Annie McDonald (cousin) and two fisherman

Below: Fishing Boat Leaving the Harbour at Tarbert





Above: Callum McDonald (left in both) from Rocklee Cottage with Chrissie (left) and Annie McDonald (jilted)

Below: Bobby and Chrissie

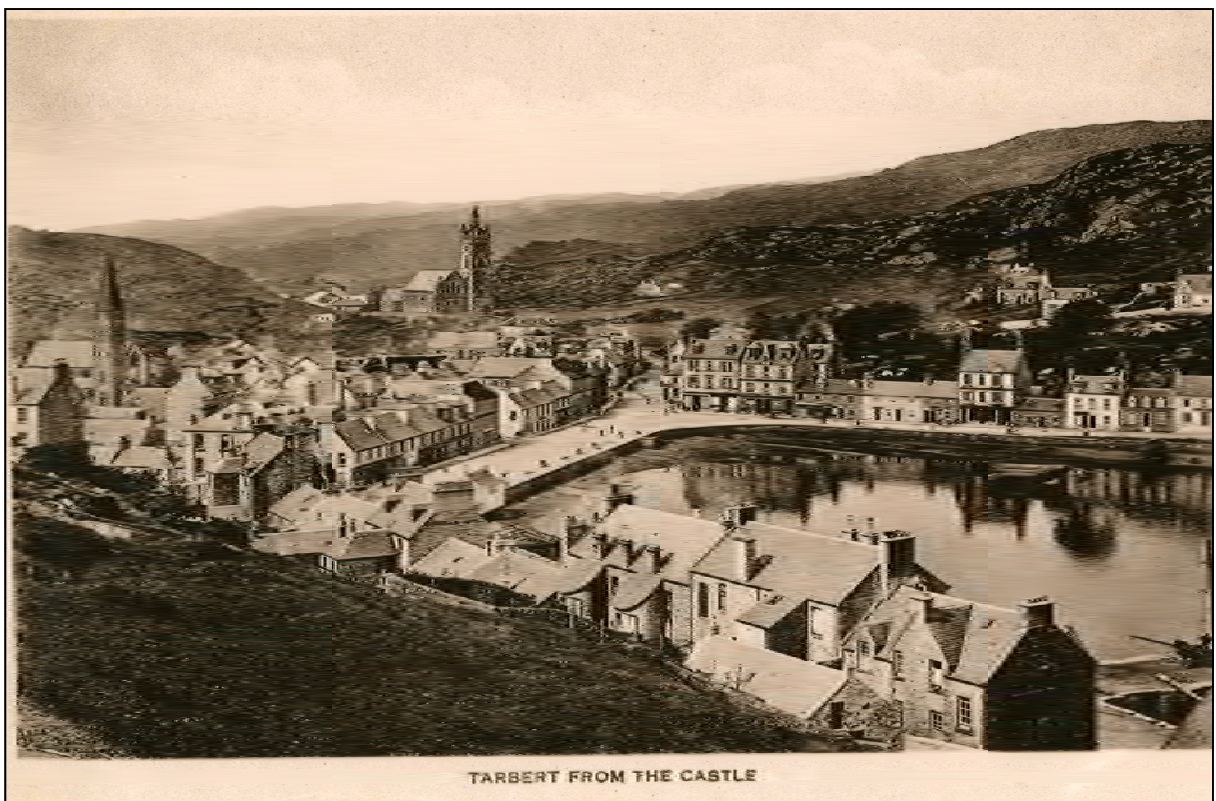
The main work in Tabert was fishing. It was herring they caught, but not any more, it is now prawns and scampi. When Sandy and Donald came, they would often go out on the boats with the fisherman, with Uncle Duncan or Archie McAlpine. They would leave at five at night and be back in the morning with enough herring for the family. The rest of the catch went to the markets in Glasgow.



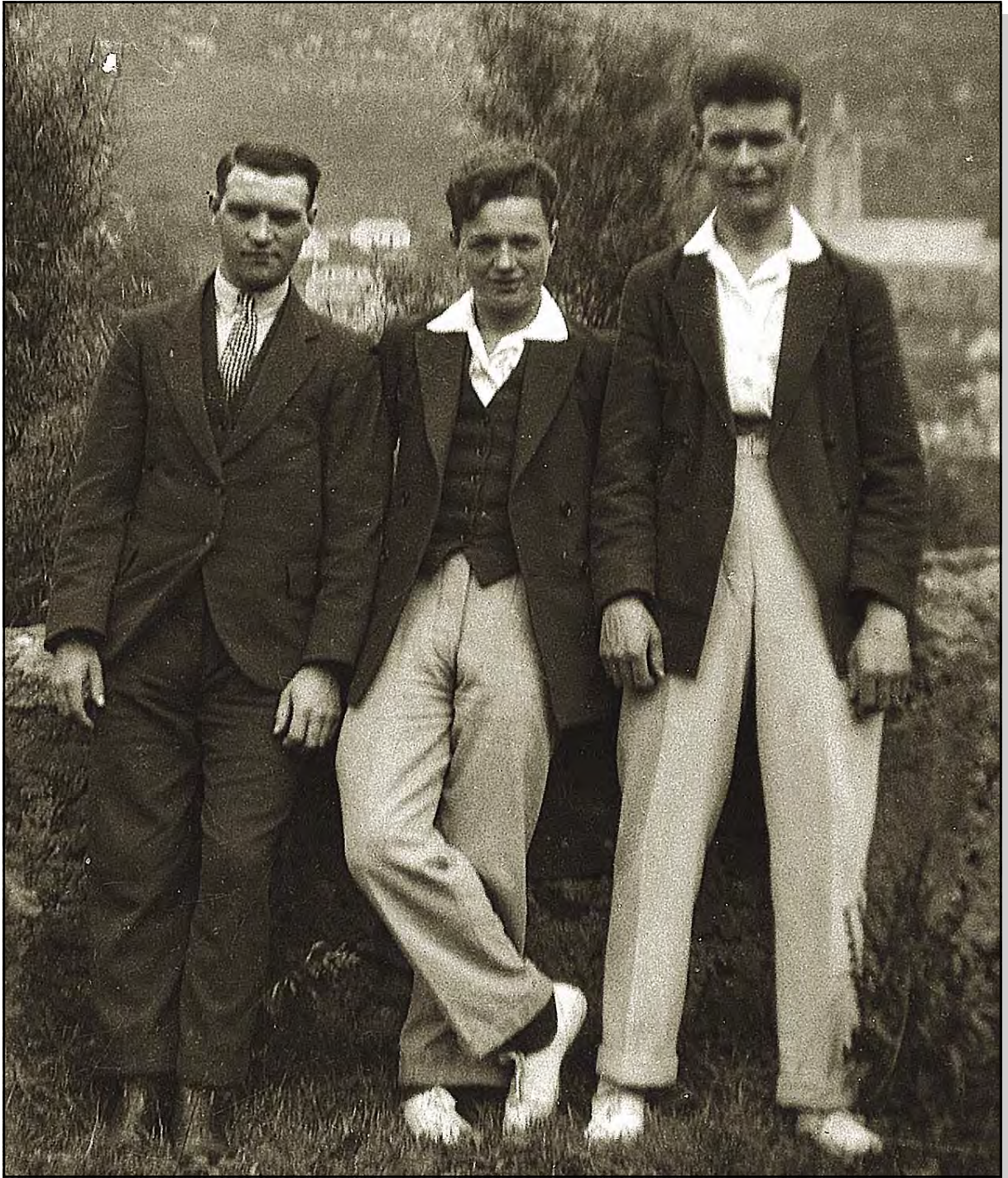
Fisher Lassies, Tarbert CS 268

Above: Women in Tarbert who would gut the fish

Below: An old postcard taken from the Castle



TARBERT FROM THE CASTLE



Donald, Bobby and Jimmy in Tarbert.

This was taken from near Uncle Duncan's house as you can see the Parish Church in the background. Donald, Bobby and Jimmy all bowled, but Donald is the only one here not in his bowling shoes!



*Above: Jimmy, Chrissie, Bobby and Agnes at Tarbert
Below: Bobby (with a cigarette, didn't know he ever smoked!)*





A bit of Rowing! Chrissie and Agnes. Wonder who was having a rest, taking the photo below, as it looks like very hard work as though we were rowing through mud!





Left: Chrissie and Meg (don't know the fellows)

Right: Sarah McDonald from Rocklee in the Back Street, Tarbert

Below Left: Donald, Neil, Chrissie at Rocklee. Neil and his bother lived next door in North Fredrick Street. Every year, we would catch up with friends in Tarbert.

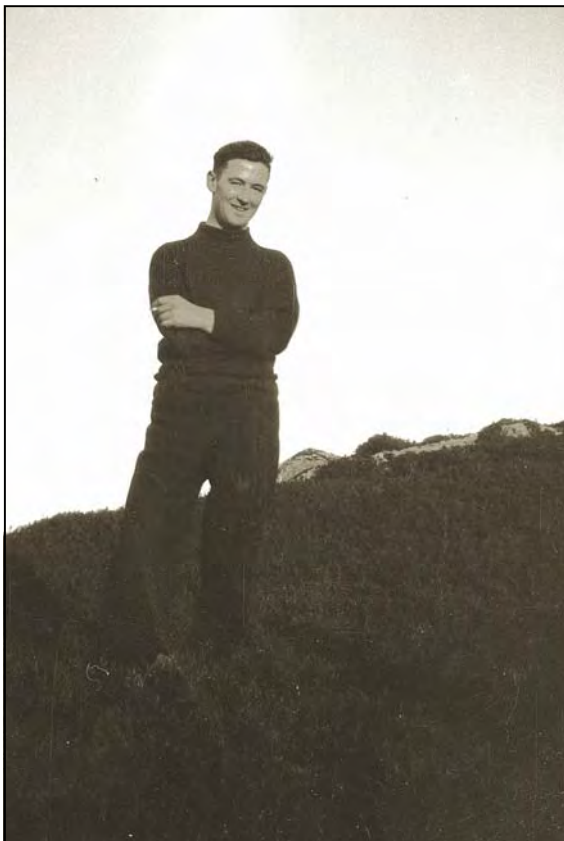
Below Right: Chrissie and Meg, another two lucky fellows!





Left: Duncan McAlpine, Chrissie, Jimmy McFarlane, Chrissie Fraser. Chrissie Fraser worked with me and came to Tarbert one year. She fell for a fellow, Nichol Bain. He went to Inverness. She followed hot on his heels and we never heard from her again. Jimmy lived at the Quay in Tarbert.

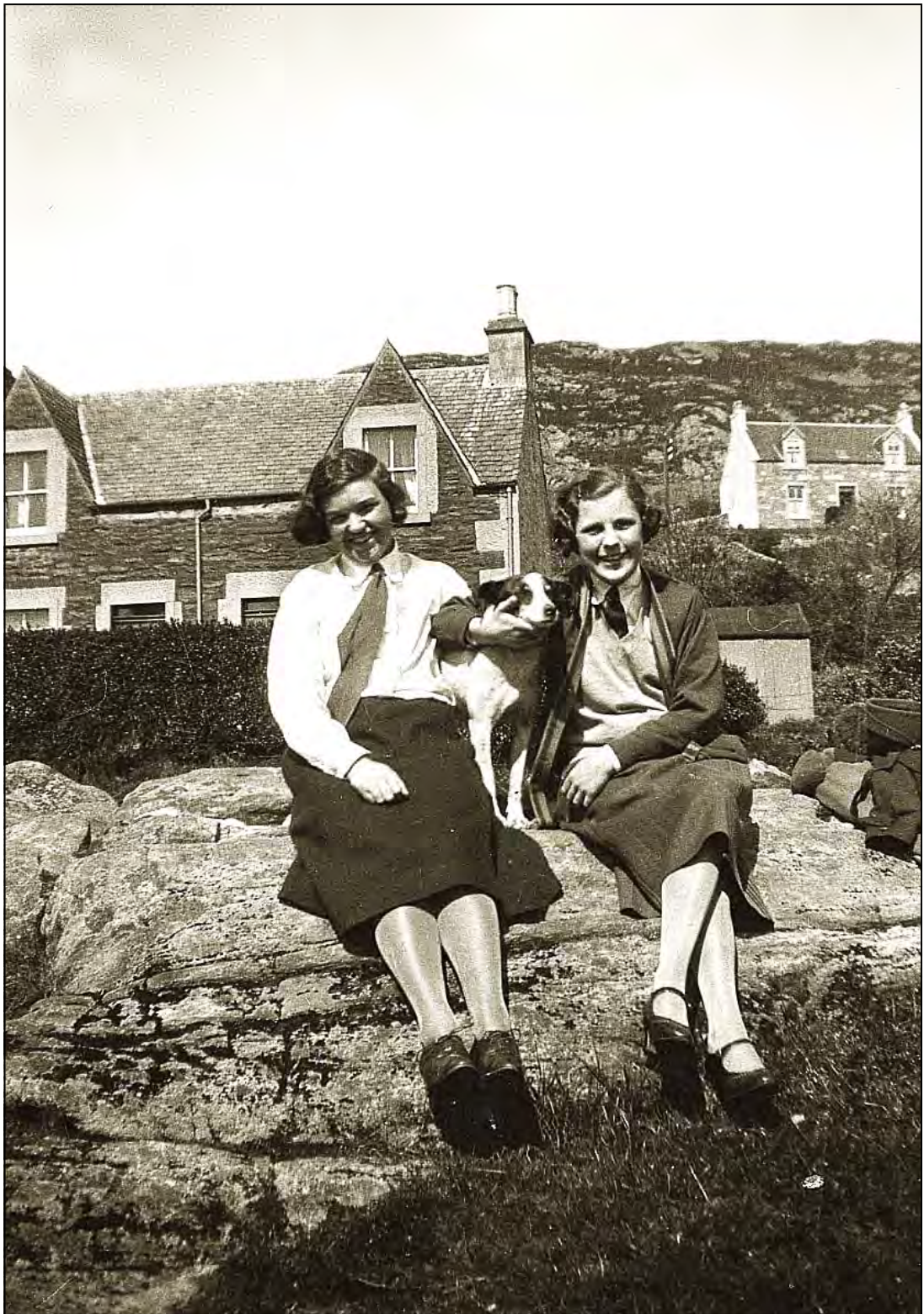
Below: Jimmy McFarlane and *Right:* Other boarders at one of the holiday cottages.





Johnny, Chrissie,
Agnes and Alec
McEwan at Tarbert,
white shores





: Chrissie and her friend
(around 1932)



Taken at one of the Cottages we stayed in high above the pier looking down over it.

Above: Bobby, Mother, Father and Donald

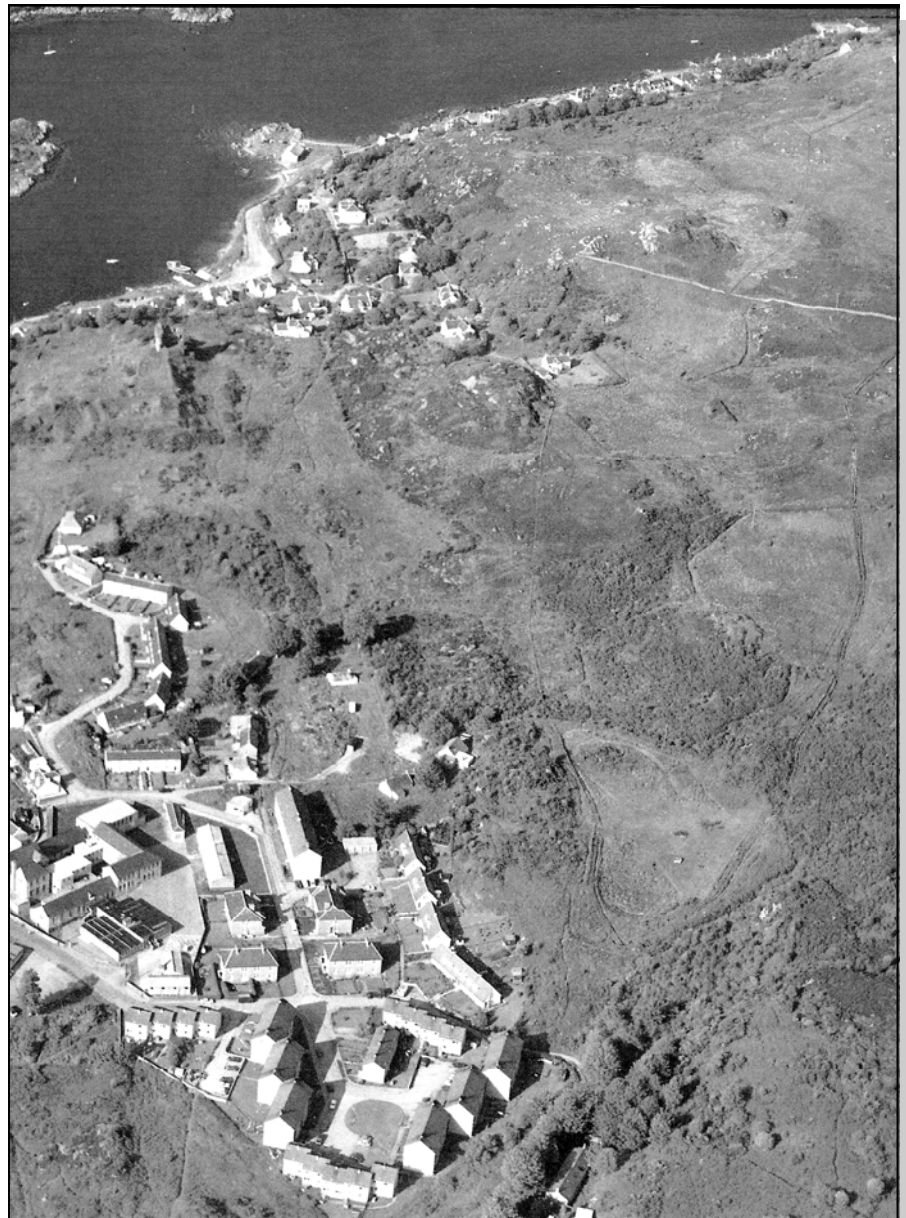
Below: Donald, Father, Mother, fellow lodger

Right: I think these were the people who owned the cottage



Visiting Uncle Duncan's Croft

You can see Baluachrach in the above photo, to the right of the hayfield. Below, it can be seen in a clump of trees slightly left of centre





Above: Taken from the High Road. There's many a time I have
sat and enjoyed that view

Below: Christine and I on my last visit to Tarbert in 2000





Some postcards from 1968

