

Making Memories



The Story of
Glasgow
Children's
Holiday Scheme

Foreword

In the 1950s when Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme began its work thousands of city families went "doon the water" for their holidays. Today, many of us may look forward to a couple of breaks each year. For many Glasgow families, however, even that traditional trip to the Clyde Coast is still an impossible dream.

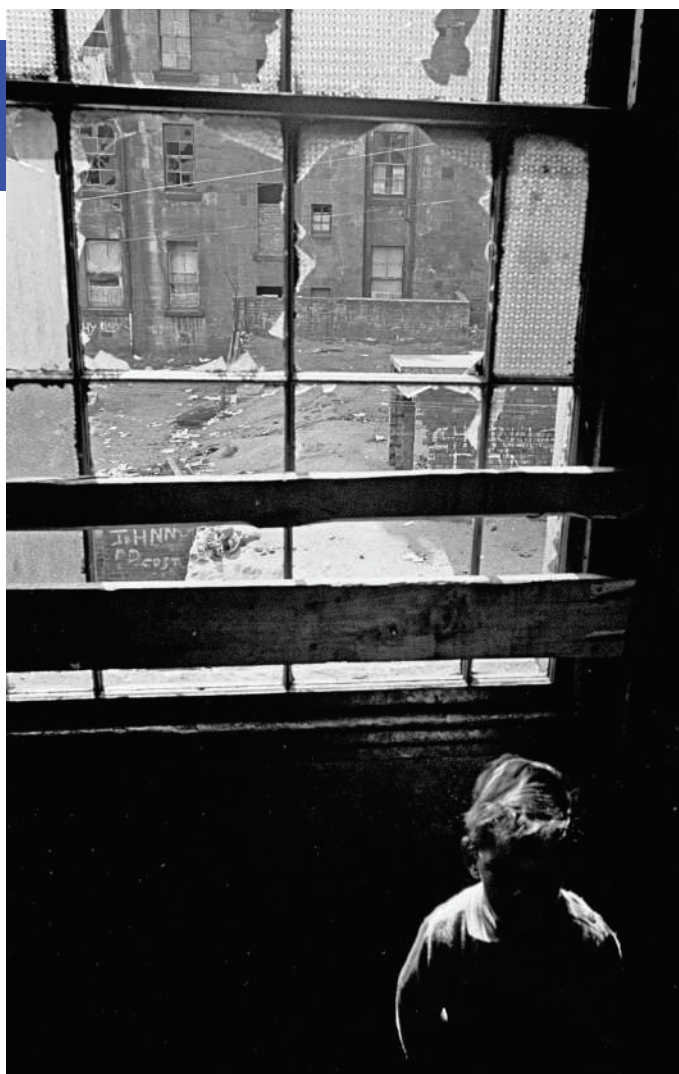
Living standards have improved enormously since Lillas Graham established the Scheme in the Gorbals where I grew up. Nevertheless, a third of Glasgow's children live in poverty. That is 36,000 youngsters, many of whom never experience a holiday, a chance for them and their families to bond and unwind and have fun and adventure.

Families in this situation are among those that need holidays the most. Parents struggle to make ends meet, have health issues or face problems such as domestic violence, addictions or bereavement as well as the needs of children with disabilities.

Over the years Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme has given thousands of children a "passport" to new horizons and new experiences. Imagine all those happy faces, and imagine, for instance, being the young girl whose first trip out of Glasgow was on a Loganair flight to a host family in Shetland!

Host families still play an important role but the charity has responded to demand for family breaks by providing static holiday caravans overlooking the Firth of Clyde at Wemyss Bay. Each year around 500 children and young people enjoy holidays, most of them with their families in the caravans and the rest with host families or with their youth groups.

The poignant, heartwarming and at times funny stories told within the pages of Making Memories reveal how Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme adapted to challenges over the last seven



A boy on the staircase of a Gorbals tenement
Picture courtesy of Nick Hedges



Lillas Graham in 1964

decades. Lillas Graham would have been proud of what every staff member and volunteer has achieved, just as I am proud to be Patron.

I wish the very best to this wonderful wee charity with a big heart as it continues to do its good work.

Alex Norton, Patron

Gorbals Beginnings

It took only four words from a young boy to spark off the project that would become a blessing for thousands of children and their families. A project that would become Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme.

In 1952, Lillas Graham, a woman born into a well-to-do family in England but with distinguished Scottish roots, became a community worker in the Gorbals district of Glasgow. For many years Gorbals had been the most notorious slum area in Britain. Families, crowded into decaying tenements, endured extreme poverty and high unemployment, and the effects of high levels of crime and alcohol abuse.



Last occupants of a Gorbals tenement in 1970
Picture courtesy of Nick Hedges

Lillas Graham had been appointed to her role by the Scottish Episcopal Church, but the Church initially resisted her strong desire to live in Gorbals among the people she would serve because that was considered too risky for a woman. After a year of commuting from the more amenable surroundings of Ibrox, Lillas Graham got her way and she moved into a flat at 10 Abbotsford Place in the heart of Gorbals.

The flat became a drop-in centre with a play room, a nursery and a room where local women, the Old Hens Club, could meet and chat. (The women ran, in nearby Bedford Street, a

second hand clothing store known as the Hen House.) Also drawn to the lively bustling flat in Abbotsford Place were young volunteers, motivated by their Christian faith to do good works.

It was in this flat, in the mid 1950s, that a small boy opened Lillas Graham's eyes to a form of deprivation that had been overlooked: the need for children to have a break from their surroundings, to broaden their horizons.



10 Abbotsford Place, Lillas Graham, Jean Kennedy and two local children, Raymond and Rosemary

One day, Lillas Graham mentioned that she would be going on holiday for a couple of weeks. Hearing this, the boy asked: "What's a holiday, Miss?" That innocent question proved to be a turning point in Lillas Graham's life and work. She would later comment: "All his years, and he had never had a holiday, never known what one was."

Something had to be done. Gorbals children needed to be given a chance to escape, if only for a few days, from the grimy, smoky confines of their community and to enjoy the fresh air, fun and adventure of the countryside.

The question was, how could large numbers of children be given holidays when money was scarce? Lillas Graham already knew the answer

from her days as a youngster living on the family farm in Suffolk. Children from the London slums would be sent by a charity, the Children's Country Holiday Fund, to the farm and to other welcoming homes out in the country.

In 1956 Lillas Graham contacted Scottish Episcopal churches in rural locations, asking if they could find host families that would take a Gorbals child for a week or two during the summer holidays. In Lillas Graham's words: "We wrote to the rectors

of 'Piskie' churches in desirable holiday locations. We reckoned that if they gave the prospective hostesses the 'okay' then we could trust our children to them."

The responses were extremely positive: families in many rural parts of Scotland said they would happily open their doors to Gorbals children. That left the problem of getting the children to and from their host families. The solution was found by road, rail and even air.

The Holidays Commence



Lillas Graham, Richard Holloway and group in the park

The Right Reverend Dr Richard Holloway, the former head of the Scottish Episcopal Church, was working as a curate in Gorbals in 1962 when Lillas Graham "roped him" into driving children to their holiday homes. Accompanying him on those journeys in Jemima, Lillas Graham's small green van, was Jean Kennedy, a young woman that Holloway had recently met in New York, and who would become his wife.

Richard Holloway described the journeys: "With the kids in the back, we drove west to Kilmalcolm and Bridge of Weir and down the Ayrshire coast. We drove east as far as Hawick in the Borders, placing children with their welcoming hosts. And in those drives, Jean and I fell in love."

In those early days Lillas Graham estimated that between 15 and 20 children went on holiday each year. Her guidelines for who got holidays were simple: "I tried to send children who I knew really needed a holiday and also not to send the same

ones year after year. I felt that although it could never be perfect, at least something was happening."

By the 1960s what had come to be known as Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme was well established. Most of the children travelled to their holiday homes by rail, accompanied by a woman volunteer. A train journey was exciting in itself because many, if not most, of the children had never been out of Gorbals, let alone Glasgow.



Lillas Graham with children in the back court at Abbotsford Place

Tricia McConalogue, was aged eleven when she went on her first holiday in 1967. She shared a bed with her two sisters in the family's cramped 'room and kitchen' flat, with outside toilet. Tricia's father was a bricklayer, frequently laid off, and his suit was often pawned on a Monday and

redeemed on a Friday. Tricia was one of the children who attended the "Miss Graham Club" run by "a really posh lady". When Tricia was offered a holiday, her mother paid ten shillings for her to have a fortnight in Argyll. Volunteers took her to the old St Enoch Station where she was put on a train for Oban. Tricia said: "I loved the train journey but it was quite daunting because my whole existence was in the Gorbals and the nearest part of the city centre, which was Argyle Street."

Tricia, clutching her "wee bag with her jammies", was met at Oban Station by her hostess, a Lady Cunningham, wearing a tartan skirt and accompanied by her gold and black labradors. "The lady was absolutely wonderful," Tricia continued, "She took me to her holiday house on the isle of Mull. It was a wee house and it was quiet. The very first night I was so scared I wet the bed." Tricia's holiday turned out to be a "wonderful time", playing with local children, being introduced to horse riding and having her first taste of artichokes, "which I still think are a big waste of money". The holiday was a big success and the following year, Lady Cunningham invited Tricia back, this time to her large house in Forfar. "I kid you not, when I got up in the morning and had breakfast everything was on silver dishes. I could have had kippers, poached eggs or porridge and there was a whole array of people working for her."

Another Gorbals girl, Elsie Reid, was aged 10 when she took her first trip outside of Glasgow, by plane, to Islay. Elsie would also fly to holidays on the Isle of Man and would join, and later supervise, parties of children heading north to stay with families on the Black Isle. Elsie said: "I remember Norah Trundle, from the holiday scheme, visiting us and getting my photo taken so I could go on holiday. I also remember the wide open spaces and the sheep and the sea on Islay, and building a sandcastle on the Isle of Man."

Despite the growing success of the Scheme, Lillas Graham was not content. She realised that mothers, "showing signs of being washed out and exhausted", and younger children also needed a break. For one summer, Lillas Graham got the use of the spacious Episcopal manse and gardens at Balmaha on the shores of Loch Lomond.

In following years it became more and more

difficult to find country houses that were not, as in one case, stranded in the middle of moorland, or, in another, letting in rainwater like a sieve.

Conscious that time spent organising summer holidays for mothers and their younger children meant less time for visiting families in Gorbals, Lillas Graham hoped for a "miracle". That miracle arrived in the shape of Braendam, a mansion house near Stirling that she inherited from an aunt. Braendam opened for family holidays in 1963 and Lillas Graham eventually moved to the mansion in 1972 after Abbotsford Place was demolished in a massive redevelopment scheme that replaced tenements with highrise blocks. Lillas Graham was joined at Braendam by Nan Bertram, a schoolteacher who had helped out with clubs and other activities at 10 Abbotsford Place before eventually moving in full-time to have closer involvement with Braendam. Lillas Graham and Nan Bertram worked closely as a team, setting up the Glasgow Braendam Link group which provided a meeting point for Glasgow families between visits to the house.

Elsie Reid was among the first children at Braendam when she joined her mother there for a break. Tricia McConalogue, too, spent time at Braendam, but as a mother with two sons needing respite during a difficult period in her life. Tricia said: "There was me, twenty years on, once again having a holiday courtesy of Lillas Graham." Today, Braendam House, operated by the Lillas Graham Trust, continues to work with families in difficulty.



A picture of Elsie Reid taken as her 'introduction' to future host families

The Gorbals Group

For much of the time that Liliash Graham worked in Gorbals another church based group of people was living alongside and serving Gorbals families. The Gorbals Group of Church of Scotland ministers, their families, social workers and local people was established in 1958 in Abbotsford Lane, close to Liliash Graham's flat.



Abbotsford Place, birthplace of the Children's Holiday Scheme

The Gorbals Group was inspired by the social activist ministers of East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York. One of the Gorbals Group ministers, Geoff Shaw, who later became the first Convener of Strathclyde Regional Council, had seen the work of the East Harlem Parish and was influenced by its commitment to working for better housing conditions and supporting young people.

Among the achievements of the Gorbals Group was the setting up in 1968 of the Crossroads Youth and Community Association which continues to work to improve the lives of families in Gorbals and Govanhill. The Gorbals Group also ran its own children's holiday scheme and renovated a deserted cottage on the Ardnish Peninsula as a base for summer camps.

The Rev John Harvey, with his wife Molly, joined the Gorbals Group in 1963 before later becoming leader of the Iona Community and then, in the 1990s, chair of the holiday scheme's management committee. He remembers helping Geoff Shaw take a group of teenage boys on an eventful trip to the cottage.

John Harvey said: "We arrived at the other side of the loch in the dark. We got into the boat and the kids were silent, totally spooked. Geoff and I tried to start the outboard motor but it just wouldn't start. Eventually, in a fury, Geoff pulled the string one more time and it flew out of his hand into the water.

"The boys were sitting there and it was beginning to rain but I found a bit of string or rope on the shore and got back to find that Geoff had fitted the motor the wrong way round and that was why it wasn't starting. No mention was made of that, he was in quite a bad mood, but we got the boat started and the kids across to the cottage. They bedded down on the floor in their sleeping bags. The next morning the sun was up and the boys were running about outside, delighted."

The razing of the Gorbals tenements effectively meant the end of the Glasgow Group but Liliash Graham's holiday scheme continued under the wing of the Social Responsibility Unit of the Scottish Episcopal Church's Glasgow and Galloway Diocese. An office was found for the Scheme in council social work premises at Crownpoint Road, then later at the St Mary's Cathedral office at Napierhall Street and a series of subsequent locations. Members of the unit included Elizabeth Anderson, who ran a Good Neighbours' scheme, and Betty Marshall, who was adoption society officer before moving to the holiday scheme. Elizabeth Anderson organised holidays for East End children while Norah Trundle continued with families in the Gorbals.



Mother and baby, Gorbals tenement in 1970
Picture courtesy of Nick Hedges

Betty Marshall, who wrote *Nasturtiums and Nettles*, a history of social work carried out by the Episcopal Diocese, moved north to the Black Isle in 1982 but maintained her link with the holiday scheme by visiting potential host families in the Highlands to check on whether they were suitable for the role.

As for the children, youngsters from Gorbals could certainly live up to the feisty and resilient image presented by the hardy Gorbals Diehards in John Buchan's thriller *Huntingtower*. In 1966, for instance, Gorbals youngsters turned out in force to demonstrate outside the City Chambers in protest at a council move to cut the £1,000 annual grant for their 'Venny' adventure playground. The council backed down.

Some children, however, found it more difficult than the majority of holiday youngsters to adjust to their new surroundings. Betty Marshall remembers that during a time of heightened tension in Northern Ireland a young Catholic boy thought he would be killed because he was going to stay with a family at RAF Leuchars.

It was not uncommon for some youngsters to tell little white lies to make their home life seem better than it was. Joyce Stevenson, who was involved in running the Scheme between 1978–2003, said: "There was one little girl who went to a family in Moray who said that her dad was a policeman and the family had a Ford Cortina. The host woman phoned and said I don't think this girl should be here, she says her father's a policeman. We said no, her father hasn't worked a day in his life and if they saw the clothes she wore in Barrowfield... That was that little girl keeping her end up."

Another host complained that one little girl was better dressed than her daughter, but it was explained to her that the girl's extended family had clubbed together to dress her nicely. At the other extreme, Joyce remembers a little girl turning up with a carrier bag containing very little. The hosts, who were very understanding, were told that the charity would reimburse them for any clothes they needed to buy for the girl.

Homecomings could also be very revealing, as Hilary Gibbs discovered. Hilary, a holiday escort who was chair of the holiday scheme in 2013–16,

said: "As some children come off the train you get a really strong snapshot of what's been happening at home. Some of them have someone waiting who says 'Hi' and walks away with them having to follow on. Some parents rush up and give a hug and ask what they've been doing. Some parents ring to ask 'How are you, we miss you.' A sort of double message for kids."

Queen Street Station in the heart of Glasgow has been the point of departure for many children heading off on holiday. On one occasion, Joyce Stevenson turned up at the station to see off a child and escort. The escort, however, was not at the station so Joyce had to drop her plans for the day and accompany the child to Inverness. "There was me with one child and no coat so I phoned ahead to Betty Marshall on the Black Isle to meet me at the train with a coat. You had to be prepared for anything because you couldn't disappoint a child."

Holiday escorts have tended to be retired women such as Alva Caldwell, who was a staff member at the University of Glasgow's Adam Smith building until 1995. Alva had a contrasting childhood to youngsters in her care. She was born in Buenos Aires, where her British father had gone to work, and she spent her youth in Argentina and Uruguay before sailing from Montevideo to the UK in 1954.

Alva joined the Scheme in 1997 and every summer for ten years she would accompany children to far flung destinations including Aberdeen, Inverness, Montrose and Lochgilphead. "When you met the children at the station they would be stressed," said Alva, "But when you picked them up at the end of their holiday I could see they had blossomed."

Alva, in common with the other escorts, would take playing cards or board games such as snakes and ladders to entertain the children and encourage quiet ones to chat with her. Any nervousness or shyness tended to be dispelled a few minutes after the train had left the station – "Children would become excited as soon as they saw the countryside."

The Kerr Spiers Years

From Lillas Graham onwards Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme has drawn many outstanding individuals to its cause. One such person was the Rev Kerr Spiers, a Baptist Minister who was appointed by the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1980 as Social Responsibility Officer.

Kerr Spiers, in the words of his son Graham, the sports journalist, preached not just by the word but also by "faith in action" and a strong sense of social justice. Kerr Spiers had already carried out vocational work in deprived areas by the time he took up his new post.

Graham Spiers said: "Over a number of years I became aware of this thing called Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme which my father got involved in. I was a teenager back then and before long it became a not infrequent occurrence for my dad to be announcing on any given day that he was packing up his car with some kids to take them to Fife or to the Highlands for what he explained to me was going to be their summer holiday.



Serving his community, Kerr Spiers with a local mother and her son.



"Back then this caused me to stop and think for a moment. For me, summer holidays were a given. In my own case they were never lavish or expensive, but nonetheless, being able to go to the Moray Firth, or Fife or Ardnamurchan or Arran for 10 days was something I took for granted in the summer. I thought every kid in the country did what I did."

With the assistance of Joyce Stevenson and eight volunteers, many of them ex-social workers, Kerr Spiers ran the Scheme until 1991. During those years the Scheme overcame major challenges and introduced new ideas that still have a large bearing on how the Scheme is run today. Kerr Spiers, for instance, designed the first application form for host families, asking them to provide three referees, one of them being their doctor. Families also had to agree to a police check.

A major crisis sprang up when Kerr Spiers was a few years into his post: the Scottish Episcopal Church could no longer afford to run the Scheme. A new source of support had to be found if the charity was not to go under. Kerr Spiers held talks with the Aberlour Childcare Trust, which agreed to take on the Scheme as a project and run it as the Aberlour Holiday Scheme. According to Betty Marshall's book *Nasturtiums and Nettles*, one reason why Aberlour took over the Scheme was that there had been an explosion of drug taking, abuse and increasing vulnerability of the young.

North to Shetland

During his time in charge of the Scheme, Kerr Spiers was a familiar and popular face on television, attracting a wide audience on Scottish Television's Late Call broadcasts and also on "prayer slots" on BBC Radio Scotland and Radio Clyde. During his broadcasts, Kerr Spiers would frequently talk about the Scheme, and it was in response to this that in the mid-1980s a youth worker called Betty Clark contacted him from Shetland.

Betty Clark had listened to Kerr Spiers' broadcasts and had been touched and inspired by his accounts of how Glasgow children flourished during rural breaks away from home. Betty told Kerr Spiers that she could arrange for children to spend time with Shetland families if the Scheme could manage to get them up to the islands.



Glasgow girl Lynne Miller feeds a 'caddy' orphaned lamb



Colleen Donnelly at the sheep with Steve Gerrard and Cat

The Scheme persuaded Loganair, which ran scheduled flights to Shetland, to provide free flights. Joyce Stevenson would fly to Shetland to meet prospective host families before they received their young charges. The children's flights began in 1986 and a boy called Geoffrey was the first youngster to make the 300 mile journey. Joyce Stevenson said: "Geoffrey had a great time at Betty's. She introduced him to all her friends and the next year we had ten people offering holidays on Shetland."

The air hostesses on the Loganair flights would look after the children until they arrived at Sumburgh Airport where the host families would be waiting to collect them. The children, up to 20 in any one year, lived with families all over the islands. One boy stayed with a family on Unst, the most northerly inhabited island in the British Isles. When he returned home, the boy told Joyce Stevenson that he wanted to be a policeman on Unst when he grew up. When asked why, he replied: "There's no crime up there."

One of the Shetland hosts was Beth Gerrard: "The first child we hosted was Lynn Miller in 1994. She visited the following year, we then called on her family when we were flying out of Glasgow Airport and the following year she came to Spain on holiday with us."

Beth and her husband Tony played host to three other children, among them Colleen Donnelly who still maintains very close contact with the Gerrards.

Beth said: "Colleen came to us in 1999, not long after Tony came out of hospital following a brain haemorrhage operation. Friends and relatives urged me to cancel her visit but I simply couldn't do that to a child who was about to have a long awaited holiday.

"Colleen turned out to be an absolute treasure. Like Lynn, she has spent holidays abroad with us, attended both our sons' weddings and we were guests at her wedding. She is now the proud mum of twins."

The Scheme received a boost in 2002 when an article in the Shetland Times headlined "Could you give a child a break this summer?" attracted host families for 40 children from the deprived Ferguslie Park area of Paisley. Like the Glasgow children who went before them, the Paisley

youngsters enjoyed picnics, boat trips and bird watching as well as experiencing life on the farm, with peat cutting a favourite activity!

During Kerr Spiers' tenure and on into the 1990s the Scheme provided holidays for up to 130 children. As well as Shetland, and also the Hebrides, the children stayed with families in almost every corner of mainland Scotland including Thurso, Inverness, Aberdeen, Oban and Fort William. The children were referred mainly by their schools: Barrowfield, Cranhill and Anderston primaries, but social workers also referred children because they knew the Scheme would ensure the youngsters would be in a safe environment. At this time there emerged a second generation of holiday children, particularly from Barrowfield, whose parents had enjoyed host holidays in the 1960s and early 1970s.

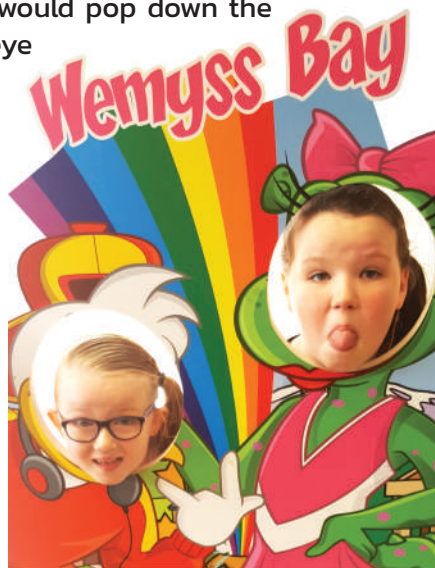
Caravan Breaks for Families



In 1991 Kerr Spiers left the charity to move to Toronto where he became senior minister of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, the largest Baptist church in Canada. Some months before his departure the Scheme embarked on what would become a major focus of activity: caravans for family breaks. The first caravan, made available for two weeks in 1990 by the Mothers' Union of the Scottish Episcopal Church, was on a farm in Dumfriesshire. One family enjoyed their time at the caravan but a mother of two young children, who holidayed later at the caravan, pleaded with Joyce Stevenson: "Don't send us there again, there's nothing but coos and trees."

Joyce was now running the holiday scheme. The Scheme was given a caravan at Anstruther on the Fife coast. The caravan may have been basic, with slats on the toilet door that fell out when it was closed, but it was extremely popular with families. This positive reaction persuaded the Scheme to expand its involvement with caravans and in 1994 it was awarded National Lottery funding to purchase three caravans for the "Ainster" site. Typical of the network of friends that the charity had built up across Scotland was Jean Allan, a former helper with the Good Neighbours scheme and now resident of St Andrews, who would pop down the road to keep an eye on the caravans.

In 1993 it was decided that the Scheme should become a charity in its own right, with a constitution that allowed it to be managed by a committee comprising of up to



eleven volunteers; members of the major Christian denominations, voluntary organisations and the local authority. In March 1994 the Scheme was granted charitable status under the original name, the Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme, and was supported by local authorities and voluntary contributions. The Scottish Episcopal Church's Social Responsibility Unit allowed the Scheme to use an office in St Vincent Place rent-free, and the head of the unit, Georgie McDonald, was most supportive.

In the late 1990s the Scheme decided to expand its choice of holidays for children. A link was set up with Teen Ranch, a Christian faith based organisation that ran residential activity holidays in Perthshire for youngsters aged 10-17. Teen Ranch, which still operates today, was immediately popular with the children sent by the Scheme. The organisers were young people who provided a range of outdoor activities including horse riding, archery, rifle shooting, canoeing and crafts.

The New Millennium

Around the turn of the Millennium the Scottish Episcopal Church announced that it was closing down its social responsibility unit and that it would need the holiday scheme's office in St Vincent Street. Fortunately, the Glasgow Society of Social Service (now the Glasgow Care Foundation) stepped in with the offer of a free office at 30 George Square. The offer was gladly accepted and John Harvey, at that time the holiday scheme's chairman, wrote to the Society, expressing sincere thanks and proposing a monthly donation in lieu of rent.

The Society's "gift" of an office and the holiday scheme's response reflected the warm relations and close cooperation that existed, and continue to exist, between the two organisations. Joyce Stevenson happened to be secretary of the Society at the time the holiday scheme was losing its St Vincent Street office: "And Mary McLean, who worked for the society, put in a word for us."

Mary McLean, who remains welfare officer at Glasgow Care Foundation, is also a holiday scheme trustee. The Foundation, which helps needy people who cannot afford necessities such as washing machines or cots, has also provided funds to the holiday scheme.

At the start of the Millennium the Scheme began to experience greater difficulty in ensuring that large numbers of children still went to host families. Some existing hosts were getting on in years and felt they could no longer maintain the same level of commitment. Also, many parents of children requiring a holiday no longer felt easy



Joyce Stevenson



Ann Pert



John Harvey



Mary McLean

about sending their youngsters to families and places they did not know. This reflected the general situation in society where parents were becoming less willing to let their children play outdoors, a far cry from the time of the Scheme's birth when most children from Gorbals and virtually everywhere else could roam relatively free.

In 2003 Ann Pert, a former senior social worker, took charge as coordinator with Joyce becoming her assistant. The pair were confronted with an

even worsening drop in host numbers and the number of children having holidays had fallen to 43. "There was the feeling that the holiday scheme was on its knees," said Ann.

Shetland, however, continued to be an important holiday location, and in 2007 the Convener of Shetland Islands Council hosted a 21st anniversary celebration of the Scheme's link with the islands. The event, organised by Betty Clark, was attended by hosts from throughout the islands. Colleen Donnelly was chosen as the representative of the Glasgow and Paisley children. Two years later, however, the Shetland link came to an end, caused largely by prohibitive charges that the Scheme now had to pay for flights between Glasgow and Sumburgh, and hosts' advancing years.

Faced with the reduction in hosts, and the increase in families that still wanted their children to go on holiday, but not at strangers' houses, Ann Pert decided to develop the Teen Ranch link and the provision of caravans for family holidays. Links were built up with Ruchazie Parish Church which was very involved in community work. As

a result of these efforts, the number of children having holidays had risen to 330 by 2006, and went on to almost hit Ann's target of 500 by the time she retired at the beginning of 2015.

Over several years as many as 42 Ruchazie children attended Teen Ranch annually with their youth group leaders. The feedback from the youth leaders was that the youngsters formed a close bond and worked well together, particularly youngsters who attended Teen Ranch more than once.

As time went on, however, there was mounting concern among some committee members that organising Teen Ranch holidays was placing too big a burden on the holiday scheme resources. There was also discomfort about the religious aspect of the morning gatherings that the children were required to attend before they could enjoy their adventure and craft pursuits. No children or youth workers had complained about the religious element of their stays at Teen Ranch, nevertheless 2013 would be the last year that the Scheme sent children to the centre.

"Doon the Watter" to Wemyss Bay

The focus of the Scheme was now concentrated on developing family caravans and recruiting new host families. Before Ann Pert's arrival at the Scheme, the closure of the Anstruther caravan site had forced Joyce Stevenson to find a new base for the family holidays. Joyce discovered a replacement site at Saltcoats and, because of limited funds, took over use of two "old and grotty" caravans that were refurbished as well as possible with new carpets, curtains and mattresses.

The Saltcoats site was viewed as just a stopgap solution and, following Ann Pert's arrival, a new search was made for a site that offered not only better caravans but also a more pleasant environment and holiday experience for families. Ann and chairperson Grace Keele found what they were looking for 20 miles up the Ayrshire coast at



A view of the Holiday Park as the Bute ferry approaches

Wemyss Bay in Inverclyde. The Wemyss Bay Holiday Park, run by Parkdean Resorts, was in an ideal location. The site had a magnificent view over the Firth of Clyde and just outside its main gate was Wemyss Bay's railway station, with direct access to Glasgow, and the CalMac ferry terminal linking to the Isle of Bute.

Without even leaving the site families could enjoy, through the scheme, a host of free entertainment including an indoor swimming pool and a lounge providing children's and family entertainment. Children could also enjoy kids' clubs and an adventure playground.



Swinging time for Barn Youth Centre children at Wemyss Bay

The big question was how could the holiday scheme afford considerable caravan rent and running costs? One of Ann Pert's key roles was budgeting and fundraising. She did a "wee calculation" to compare the 10 year cost of hiring or purchasing a year old caravan and persuaded the management committee that it was much cheaper to opt for purchasing.



Room for one more! Having fun at the caravan holiday park

Ann Pert confessed that one of her big fears about coming into the post had been fundraising, something she had never done before. "Year on year," she said, "the amount needed was increasing. I found we could make a difference by getting in touch with trusts and foundations that had the same ethos. You find the fund that has the money that wants to distribute it to the sort of thing you are doing - you are helping the fund do its job."

Explaining the role of the Scheme to potential funders was "easy". Ann continued: "You had the main ingredients which was the kids and the families themselves. The objective of giving people the opportunities that the rest of us have taken for granted."

The holiday scheme has gradually expanded and improved its fixed caravan fleet at Wemyss Bay. The Scheme has also offered holidays in a beautiful Highland setting thanks to the gift of a caravan sited beside the River Tilt at Blair Atholl in Perthshire.

The move to Wemyss Bay was an immediate

success. Ann Pert said: "The first comments from families was 'I can't believe we're being given this.' and 'I've been speaking to the woman next door and see how much she is paying, and the caravan's not as good as ours.' The caravans gave people a boost, a sense of 'I am entitled. I am just as deserving of reasonable surroundings as the next person.' The Parkdean staff totally bought into that and treated the families with total respect."

Hannah Lonnie from Carntyne is one of many who can testify to the enormous pleasure that children experience at Wemyss Bay. Hannah, her two granddaughters Freya and Meya have enjoyed holidays with their cousins Ben and Sophie. "The weans have loved it... they liked the playground, everything," said Hannah.



There was a £20 nominal charge, to cover cleaning costs, taking into account that families also had cost of travel and other holiday expenses. A year later a large, relatively new caravan was added to the 'fleet' and plans laid to replace a 10 year old caravan with a brand new one fitted with central heating and double glazing.

In 2004 a website was set up to raise the Scheme's profile and improve fundraising and also contacts with referring agencies; the website was improved in 2006 thanks to IT support from volunteers, and upgraded again around ten years later. It is recognised that this is an area for future development.

By 2010 the number of families enjoying caravan holidays had risen to 120 and use of the caravans was expanded when the Scheme forged a link with The Barn youth project; part of its role is to support young people who take part in award schemes designed to assist their personal development and help them move into further education, employment or training.

In 2005, Glasgow City Council held a Civic Reception for the holiday scheme in the banqueting hall of the City Chambers. The following year, the Scheme's 50th anniversary, 90 families enjoyed holidays in the three caravans. The caravans had heating in all rooms and an integral seat in the shower for people with physical disabilities, and two had ramped access.

The Barn harks back to the holiday scheme's roots because its name refers to the community facility built by the Crossroads Youth and Community Association in, an albeit transformed, Abbotsford Place. The Barn takes groups of boys and girls to



Wemyss Bay at different times of the year. During a recent visit youngsters spoke excitedly about trips to the seaside and night walks and hunts for foxes in the nearby woods.



Put 'em up! Happy grin from a boy at the adventure playground

Syed Afgan was 12 when he went on his first trip with The Barn to Wemyss Bay. Six years later, after quitting a college civil engineering course that he "hated", he got a job as youth support worker at The Barn.

Syed originally thought the job would be a halfway house until he found something more permanent. He, however remained at The Barn, fully committed to its mission. Syed sees how young people such as he benefit from trips to Wemyss Bay: "The youngsters grow in confidence. The residential trips are the best way for them to build up relationships with the other young people and ourselves. They don't have anyone else but the youth support workers to rely on, we are the adults so they come to us more for help and when they go back to the Gorbals they find they can trust us with more stuff."

The constant effort to meet the caravans' running costs received a very large boost in August 2011. Ann Pert was contacted by a Borders trust, the Dunsyre Children's Holiday Camp. The trust was



High excitement for two girls from the Barn Youth Centre

winding up and had chosen the holiday scheme to receive the remains of its fund. The Chair, Carol Orr, and her Vice Chair, Hilary Gibbs, drove down to meet the trustees for a lunchtime meeting. Hilary said: "We had a lovely lunch and the trustees presented us with an envelope. We had absolutely no idea what the amount of the fund would be and our manners stopped us from opening the envelope there and then. When we left the trustees, I drove a short distance until



Hilary Gibbs

we found a parking area. Carol ripped open the envelope and we gasped when we saw the cheque was for over £75,000!"

The money enabled the holiday scheme to buy a fully adapted caravan for children with physical and intellectual disabilities. Shared Care Scotland have assisted with funding to help meet the caravan's running costs.

Although family caravan holidays may have formed a larger part of the Scheme's activities over the years, the need to recruit host families has been a constant concern of the management committee and staff. In the early 2000s Ann Pert saved on the cost of advertisements by sending articles that publicised the value and "human side" of host holidays for city children to newspapers including the Oban Times and Northern Scot. The articles struck a chord,

particularly in Moray where new hosts, including Janis and Derek Thomson, were recruited.

Janis explained that in their early days with the holiday scheme, Derek's duties with the Royal Air Force often took him away from home so she had to be the principal host. The first youngster that the Thomsons welcomed was Darren, a boy with a fondness for chips with cheese. Jan commented, "Over the years that he stayed with us we got him to try lots of other foods and he now has a far more varied diet!

"Darren was super and we very quickly settled into a comfortable friendship. One of the things that appealed to me about having a youngster holiday with us was that, being a bit of a kid at heart, I was able to join in with activities for kids and no one was able to make fun of my age while doing so."

Janis describes how Darren appeared to flourish thanks to the holidays. The Thomsons then hosted Darren's brother Jason, and Chelsea, a girl from a separate family. Although Janis and Derek could have afforded to take the children on many trips the youngsters were happy to enjoy days at the beach and other simple outdoor activities.

Janis and Derek have retired from the Scheme but they still maintain close contact with the youngsters' families and they view with satisfaction what was achieved. Janis said: "I feel that Darren, Jason and Chelsea, and indeed their family members, got a lot from this initiative. Derek and I also feel that we benefited from the



The comfortable interior of a typical Holiday Scheme caravan

experience in so many ways."

More recent host recruits from the Moray area were Dominic and Fran Young. The couple started receiving children in 2008. The first youngster was a young girl, Shania.

Dominic, who is now also a trustee of Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme, said that Shania's annual visits to the Young's in Elgin turned a very quiet, shy girl into a confident and talkative youngster who plays the French horn. Shania's sister Elaine also came north for holidays with Dominic and Fran.

Dominic said: "One of the most poignant things was on her first visit when we were driving through a place called Cullen, and Elaine, who was eight or nine, said she'd never seen the sea before. I banged on the brakes and off we went paddling. The next day we had to go down to the beach and go swimming, and Elaine and Shania were in with their costumes and off they went."

The view that the holiday scheme should not turn its back on recruiting host families, despite the strong focus on family caravan holidays, was reinforced at a meeting of management committee members in 2012. Among those attending the meeting were Carol Orr, former Chair John Harvey, and trustee Hilary Gibbs who became Chair in 2013 after Carol Orr passed away. Hilary said: "John made the point that putting a family together in a little tin box for a holiday wouldn't necessarily be good for some families. It could be like a pressure cooker."



Children enjoying a snowball fight on a Wemyss Bay winter

Alex Norton becomes Patron

Around 2014, a chance encounter with Dominic Young's parents led to the popular Scottish actor Alex Norton becoming Patron of the holiday scheme. Dominic said: "My parents live in a small village in the Languedoc region of France and they had been out for a meal when they heard another Scottish voice so they introduced themselves to Alex and his wife Sally. They had no idea who Alex was until he told them."

It turned out that the star of TV shows Taggart and Two Doors Down had been born in Gorbals. Ann Pert made up an information pack about the Scheme which Dominic sent to Alex who quickly agreed to become Patron. In his new role, Alex appeared in a publicity video (available on Youtube) in which he spoke in warm terms about the work of the Scheme and the families and children who had benefited from holidays.



Alex Norton

This period was one of major change, with the management committee pursuing the "rethink" of where the Scheme should go that had been initiated by Carol Orr. Hilary Gibbs said, "We had changes in information technology coming in and at the same time Ann said she would be retiring.

"Ann had really good social and welfare skills. She was very good at networking and fundraising. She really kept the holiday scheme moving and increasing the number of children we gave holidays to, and she had built up the caravans. We did, however, need to get out there in a more modern way."

Plans were made to expand the holiday scheme's social and business links, and the person chosen to achieve those aims was Ann Pert's successor, Douglas Wilson. Douglas Wilson came with a distinct mix of skills and experience: he had been a senior officer in South Lanarkshire Council, before he left so that he could devote more time to the two young boys that he and his wife adopted. At the council he had worked closely with Social Work, and he has also been a lay member of Glasgow Fostering and Adoption Panel.

Working alongside Douglas is Elspeth Gelsthorpe who has been administration officer since 2006. Elspeth was a committee member when she agreed to provide holiday cover for Ann Pert in May 2006 but found her temporary role lasting rather longer than originally expected. Elspeth deals with a range of statutory and voluntary organisations including Social Work, Quarriers, the Glasgow Association for Mental Health, Women's Aid as well as schools and health visitors that refer families for holidays. Hilary Gibbs commented: "It was always a strong feature of the holiday scheme that families, volunteers and agencies knew Ann and Elspeth personally. It meant, and still means, that people trust the services provided by the holiday scheme."

A further development was when the Holiday Scheme was invited to give a presentation to the Londonbased Family Holiday Association, an organisation that had provided seaside breaks for struggling UK families for more than 40 years.



A GCHS committee meeting in 2005

Hilary Gibbs went with fellow trustee June Jones to London to give an illustrated talk about the work of the Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme. Hilary added: "The Family Holiday Association's resources are considerably more than ours so the invitation was quite a big thing. Our presentation was well received and we got quite a lot of money from them." This meeting would mark the start of an ongoing working relationship between the Association and the holiday scheme.

Service of Thanksgiving

In June 2016, Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme marked its 60th anniversary with a Service of Thanksgiving. The service, introduced by the new Chair, former Strathclyde Police Superintendent John McDougall, aptly reflected the Scheme's church based and South Side roots by being held in St Margaret's Episcopal Church, Newlands.



Richard Holloway gives his moving address

The service featured testimony of people who had received holidays, and volunteers who had given time and assistance to the Scheme. One of the most touching accounts to the gathering was given by Lorna, a young mother who had suffered physical and emotional abuse from her ex-partner and had to look after three children including a baby. Lorna was exhausted and at the end of her



Douglas Wilson, Richard Holloway and John McDougall

tether, but a holiday at Wemyss Bay brought about a "phenomenal" difference. She said: "My wee boy struggles to sleep but he managed to sleep all week in the caravan without waking up."

Other speakers included Tricia McConalogue, who spoke about her holidays with Lady Cunningham, and Rhonda McKinney of Quarriers who praised the work of the holiday scheme: "Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme has been absolutely fantastic to our families. Some of the children didn't know what a holiday was but when they have gone on holiday that's all they talk about."

In a moving address, Richard Holloway spoke about his time assisting Lilius Graham and meeting his wife Jean, who "rode shotgun" on the trips in Jemima the van, delivering children to their holiday hosts. He praised the work of the holiday scheme right up to this day, putting it in

a religious context: "Here's a clue to where you will definitely find it (heaven). Start at Wemyss Bay on the Clyde Coast and listen for the laughter. When you hear it, follow it till it brings you to a caravan. That's where you'll see God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen."

Another speaker highlighted the constant need of Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme to attract support in cash and kind from charities, companies and other funders. Angus Woodward, an IT worker with the Clydesdale Bank, spoke about how he and some of his colleagues decided in 2009 to find a charity to support. The workers went onto Google and discovered that the holiday scheme's office was round the corner from their own. The volunteers initially helped out with



Accenture and Clydesdale Bank volunteers

administration and then a discussion with Ann Pert and Elspeth Gelsthorpe revealed a requirement for volunteers to give the Wemyss Bay caravans a clean before the start of the holiday season.

Angus said: "We have put our Marigolds on and helped to clean the caravans ever since. The volunteering is a great pleasure, even if you have to get down on your hands and knees scrubbing caravans on cold November days!"

The holiday scheme is grateful to a range of volunteers including, in recent years, from Accenture, Clydesdale Bank, EDF and many other individuals who help clean the caravans fundraise for the charity or volunteer in other ways.



Gathered at Wemyss Bay, the volunteers of EDF Energy

The Scheme's 60th anniversary drew motions of support in the Scottish Parliament and in the House of Commons. This period was also marked by two major fundraising achievements: the Scheme was chosen as one of three charities to receive donations from the 2015 St Patrick's Day Charity Ball, and also in 2016 the Scheme was one of the nominated charities supported by Lend Lease Guv'nors construction industry charity.



One of our volunteers hoovering a bedroom

At the St Patrick's Day Ball Hilary had a frank but friendly exchange with the Chair: "He said 'You're one of those wee charities that manage to hirple by every year?' I replied we were, and we'd hirpled for the last 60 years."

Recently, the management committee decided to dispose of the River Tilt caravan and concentrate on sustaining the five caravans at Wemyss Bay. Each caravan costs around £6,000 a year in site fees, insurance, maintenance and other costs not taking account of depreciation and replacement costs.

The Scheme is now having a fresh look at the pros and cons of owning caravans. Although the holiday scheme's caravans may be financial assets, they are also depreciating assets which would have to be replaced at a later date.

Douglas Wilson says that the Scheme continues to evolve and this has included providing shorter breaks for families that cannot afford to stay the full seven days at Wemyss Bay: "Some families have had to come home before the end of their holidays because they were running short of money. We need to be more flexible and for instance provide Friday to Monday and Monday to Friday breaks as well as look at ways we can increase our capacity at peak holiday times.

"We also want more hosts - we don't want that side of our work to wither away. We need to actively recruit new hosts, continue to ensure use of our caravans by youth groups and while the focus is on children we also need to ensure we continue to enable carers to get a break."

In 2016/17, the beginning of the Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme seventh decade, the Scheme provided caravan holidays for 212 families. Those families included 430 children, and a further 54 youngsters were taken to Wemyss Bay by the Barn and the Gorbals Youth Cafe. A further ten young people enjoyed holidays with host families, a much lower number than in past years but one that the Scheme is endeavouring to increase by recruiting new hosts.

The scheme, meanwhile, retains its decades old links with the Scottish Episcopal Church. Four local churches, St. Margaret's in Newlands, St. Ninian's in Pollokshields, St. Andrew's in Uddingston and All Saints in Bearsden raise funds for the scheme and, with volunteers, support a Christmas gift scheme which each year benefits around 50 families and 150 children.

Grateful Testimony

Whatever changes that the Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme may go through over the coming years, one thing will almost certainly remain constant: the steady stream of grateful testimony from parents and children who have been given a vital break by this "wee charity" with a big heart. Much of this testimony is expressed by people who believe that the holiday scheme has made a positive change to their lives.

Tricia McConalogue, the nervous little girl who could not take to artichokes, would go on to address the United Nations at a poverty seminar attended by Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. She would overcome troubled relationships and the loss of a young son to work for the Braendam Link and later be awarded the MBE for her work as director of the Gorbals based community charity Bridging the Gap. Tricia said: "There was something in me that wanted to make

a difference and it's thanks to the Holiday Scheme that I am now running an organisation in the Gorbals."



Tricia
McConalogue

Elsie Reid, who took her first trip out of Glasgow by plane to Islay, believes her holidays improved her self-confidence. She said: "I met new people, visited new families. The holidays made me a more responsible person, both travelling with groups to the Black Isle and also taking responsibility for the children once I was old enough."

Elsie is now a store manager for the Edinburgh Woollen Mill and, proud of her Gorbals roots, is treasurer of the Southern Necropolis Action Group which cares for the environment and heritage of the historic cemetery.

A good example of a young person's life being positively transformed involves William Reid. William, who had a difficult home life, was aged nine when, in 2003, he travelled from Ruchazie in the East End of Glasgow to the rural setting of Dumfries and Galloway. William, dressed in Celtic strip, was accompanied by Robert, another Ruchazie boy, clad in Rangers strip.

The boys stayed with David and Jan Wishart in Kirkpatrick Durham, a small village near Castle Douglas. David was a retired seaman who had been a Royal Marine and in the merchant marine, and Jan was a paediatric nurse who had run a cub pack. The Wisharts had visited Moffat when, just by chance, they saw an advertisement for the holiday scheme in the local paper.

William and Robert had holidays with the Wisharts for about another six years, enjoying roaming the hills, exploring the beach and playing card games with the family in the evening. One day the Wishart's son Iain took the boys to a spot on the coast to do a bit of sea fishing and told them to phone home if they found anything. David said: "The boys found two lobsters - I don't think Iain's seen one since."

In 2011, William visited the Wisharts on his own. Now aged 17, he was no longer eligible for a break through the holiday scheme but David and Jan told him he was still very welcome in their home. The Wisharts discovered that the Prince's Trust was running a course in personal development and training at Dumfries & Galloway College. Arrangements were made for Jan to meet William at Glasgow Central Station to take him to the interview but he did not show up. David takes up the story: "The following year William came to us



Elsie Reid at the grave of Thomas Lipton



William flanked by Jan and David

again and we thought 'You're not going home this time.' We made sure he had his interview with the Prince's Trust and the course, which included communication skills and team building, gave him a big lift."

A college lecturer told William that a hospitality industry course was about to commence. He took the course, graduated, and in Easter 2014 was

taken on as a trainee waiter in the four star Cally Palace country house hotel near Gatehouse of Fleet. William has come a long way from his first visit to the Wisharts when his escort, Hilary Gibbs, first looked at him and thought "This boy's going to sink. There was nothing confident about him." William stuck at it and enjoyed a number of years work at the Cally Palace: "Because of the trips I went with Jan and David I can now tell guests about local attractions. Maybe I'll eventually go forward to be a manager, fingers crossed, and I hope others get the same chance. It's life changing, definitely."



William, top of the world, summer 2011



Karen with James and Holly at Rothesay Castle

The simple pleasures of a holiday "doon the water" made a world of difference to Karen McCambridge and her two children when they spent a week in one of the holiday scheme's caravans at Wemyss Bay in 2017. Karen's daughter Holly, born in 2003, is visually impaired and has Williams syndrome;

her son James, born in 2006, is autistic and has epilepsy. "This was the best holiday we ever had," said Karen, "Before, every time we went on holiday we expected people to be noisy but it wasn't like that. This time, Holly's Williams syndrome didn't seem like it was a problem. It wasn't an issue, and the kids didn't feel overwhelmed. The caravan was brilliant for the kids, it was very well maintained and clean, and I used the cooker every night."

Karen and her youngsters packed a lot into their week: a ferry trip to Rothesay and a candle making shop, shows on the pier at Largs, and lashings of puff candy, rock and lollipops. "We had a lovely day at Rothesay," said Holly, "and I loved the fish and chips."

The family made the most of the attractions, including the children's entertainment, that Wemyss Bay Holiday Park had to offer. James in particular enjoyed the swimming pool and the zip slide in the adventure park. It seems, however, that homemade entertainment was the best. Karen said: "On the second last night we had a shower, got into our pyjamas, put on face masks and ran in and out of the rooms to scare each other. When you are going through difficult times it's good to play games."

Summing up the holiday, Karen added: "I think it was the best holiday we ever had. It was about making memories for my children."

The life of a young boy called Aidan Rundell has been transformed over the three years that he and the rest of his family have enjoyed breaks through Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme. Aidan, born in 2009, is autistic and has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He lives in Hamilton with his brothers, Ty, born in 2008, and Lewis, born in 2004, and mother, Suzanne. Suzanne had to give up her job to be Aidan's full time carer. The pressure left her mentally and physically exhausted so in 2014 she contacted the holiday scheme to apply for a holiday. She said: "I thought I would need to wait to the next year but the holiday scheme got in touch and said we could have a week's holiday in Blair Atholl at the end of the season."



Ty, Lewis and Aidan proudly showing his Citizenship award with mum Suzanne

At the start of that holiday, Aidan was a nervous boy who could not make friends and still needed to wear nappies at night. The next seven days of peace and quiet, feeding the ducks and seeing red squirrels (or "squiggles" as he called them) had a profound effect on Aidan. Suzanne said: "One day he went to the toilet, took his nappy off and used the 'big boy toilet'. He never even had a single accident and I think the reason it works was because he was so relaxed in that environment. He even met his first wee friend, a little girl, and let her play with his toys which he would never have done before."

Over the next two holidays, Aidan's confidence grew. In 2016 there was something of a breakthrough when Aidan told his mum that he loved her. "That was something that I had been waiting for a long time. I was over the moon," said Suzanne.

Aidan grins broadly when he talks about his holidays: "We found a playstation in our caravan. I didn't see that coming! We left our (games) doublers for others to play. I loved collecting acorns - they're still outside the back door and my Gran has lots."

Aidan continues to blossom. He attends Chatelherault Primary School where he received a Citizenship Award for being an outstanding pupil. He is a member of the school's tae kwan do club and he has represented the school at events such as a recent additional needs sports festival. It seems that every week Aidan receives a certificate from the school recognising his "can do" attitude. That is something that Liliash Graham would have recognised and applauded.

The Cameron family have enjoyed breaks at Wemyss Bay. As a family, they visited Wemyss Bay Caravan Park when their daughter, Caitlin, was alive and now enjoy that same opportunity to visit with their son Mackenzie.

They are particularly thankful for getting the use of the caravan park as it is so close to the Glasgow Children's Hospital yet far enough away from home to call it a holiday. Dad, Richard, says 'it is a chance to get away from the daily challenges that life with a sick child throws at you. It's funny how, even though you still have the same things to do, it always seems more relaxed when you are away.

We have always enjoyed our visits to Wemyss Bay. The staff are excellent and helpful with our extra requirements and Mackenzie loves the entertainment. We are very grateful to all at the Holiday Scheme for their help'.



Mackenzie Cameron and two friends at Wemyss Bay Caravan Park

Postscript Then... and now

Headteacher: Some of poorest pupils 'have never seen the sea'

EDUCATION
BY ANDREW DENHOLM

POOR pupils from Glasgow have never seen the sea or been to a farm.

A headteacher from a primary school serving one of the city's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods said the limited experiences of some pupils had a significant impact on their education.

Nancy Clunie, headteacher at Dalmarnock Primary School, in the East End, revealed the concerns at a meeting of the Scottish Parliament's education committee - which is investigating the impact of poverty on attainment.

She recalled a situation last year when she organised a school outing after a primary seven pupil told her he had never seen the sea.

Ms Clunie, who has 40 years experience in classrooms, said: "My children are being faced with texts talking about farms or the seaside and many of them have never experienced it."

"One wee boy in primary seven said to me last year 'Miss Clunie, what is the sea?' We booked a bus and we took the kids to Lunderston Bay."

"That's the river, but for that child it was the sea, and



for that child it might be the only chance he's got."

Ms Clunie went on to highlight the importance of trips where children "cuddled a bunny rabbit", climbed a mountain or threw stones into the river.

She added: "It is these kind of things that are missing, but they are expected to know that when they are reading a text to understand things they have never experienced, and it is very difficult."

The committee that parents could "outcast" if they

to provide children computers and tablets then do their homework.

Anti-poverty campaigner

Brian Scott spoke "underlying disrepair which can leave pupils

ing "a sense of embarrassment".

Mr Scott, committee the Poverty Truth

tion, spoke about



not a priority. However, there is a growing body of research that shows a holiday can have benefits far beyond just the time away.

In this booklet there are stories that support this and Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme has heard many more. This is why the charity is still working to provide more and more children and families with holidays.

While it is always good to look back at the achievements, successes and development of the Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme it is important that we look forward to ensure that the charity can continue to provide holidays for children and their families. The charity is needed as much today as it was when Liliash Graham started her work in the Gorbals. It began when a small boy asked her what a holiday was thus starting a chain of events which has lasted more than six decades and has provided holidays for thousands of children and their families.

It is a sad and sobering reflection that on 2 May 2018 the Evening Times featured an article that related how Nancy Clunie, Head Teacher at Dalmarnock Primary School, was shocked when one of her pupils asked her "What is the sea?". This does not surprise everyone involved with Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme. In feedback from families and during our regular evaluations we continually hear of children that have never been on a train, never seen the sea, never been on a boat and never been on a holiday. With almost a third of children in Glasgow living in poverty families face difficult choices every day on how they are going to spend their very limited resources. It's hardly surprising that a holiday is

In doing so we are constantly adapting and trying to improve the service that we provide. We are almost totally dependant on grants and donations. We have worked hard, over the last few years, to put ourselves on a firmer financial footing by ensuring that trustees are provided with better and more accurate financial information that reflects the real costs of providing our service. This has allowed us to make changes to service provision that necessitated some hard decisions, such as the reduction of our estate from six static caravans to five, but also allowed us to increase provision by piloting short breaks and hiring additional capacity from the holiday park company. This has enabled us, in 2018, to provide 566 children and young people, 204 families and 455 adults to get a break.

Despite all the positive changes in the last sixty years too many children and families still find themselves in the grip of poverty. Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme still has an important role to play in helping these families experience what so many others take for granted. We are grateful for all the support that the charity has received over the years and for as long as this support continues Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme will continue on.

John McDougall, Chair

How You Can Help

Holidays, for most of us, offer an escape to new horizons, fun and adventure.

For many families, however, holidays are out of reach. Glasgow remains the most deprived city and local authority area in Scotland. Almost half of Glasgow's residents stay in the 20% of most deprived areas in Scotland. Around one-third of all children in the city are estimated to be living in poverty, that is over 36,000 children, many of whom may never enjoy a few days at the seaside or in the country.

Since the 1950s Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme (GCHS) has provided holidays for disadvantaged children and their families, providing an opportunity to break the routine, have fun and build positive memories and experiences. Each year GCHS organises holidays for around 500 children from the Greater Glasgow area.

How you can help

The Holiday Scheme relies entirely on grant funding and donations. A £10 donation can provide toys and games for our caravans, £50 can help pay for a family holiday, £100 can help take children to their host holiday destination and £5000 can pay for the siting and maintenance of 1 of our caravans for a full year enabling 80-90 children to get a holiday.

The Holiday Scheme relies on volunteers. We require host families who would be willing to give a child or children a break each year; volunteers to escort children to their host locations; volunteers to fundraise or to help us out with key tasks such as cleaning our caravans or helping with our Christmas gift scheme.

If you can help us in any way please get in touch. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Please donate at: www.glasgowchildrensholidayscheme.org.uk

Tel **0141 248 7255** Email: admin@glasgowchildrensholidayscheme.org.uk

Thank you



Thank You

The Holiday Scheme would like to thank Alan Forbes for researching and preparing our story and to everyone who contributed.

There are too many people to acknowledge and thank over the several decades of the Scheme.

We are grateful to so many individuals, trusts and organisations for support. The following is a note of thanks to many of our current and regular supporters. We offer a huge thank you to all on behalf of all the thousands of children and families who have had a memorable experience over the years.

The Holiday Scheme couldn't run without you. Thanks to all who have helped past, present and future.

Family Holiday Association	EDF Energy and Helping Hands volunteer initiative	Shared Care Scotland - Better Breaks Fund
T Bannigan and Staff at Accenture	A Woodward and Yorkshire and Clydesdale Bank Foundation	STV Appeal and Commonwealth Fund
All Saints Episcopal Church, Bearsden and Lunch Club	WA Cargill Charitable Trust	The Ryvoan Trust
Dr Guthrie's Association	ALA Green Charitable Trust	St James Place Foundation
Ruchazie Parish Church	Slaters	St Andrew's Church, Uddingston
Spurgin Charitable Trust	Corra Foundation	Glasgow City Council
John Napier's Trust	St Ninian's Episcopal Church, Pollokshields, Glasgow	Scotland Transerv
Mrs Jane Allan's Trust	James Thin Charitable Trust	Sainsbury's
Radio Clyde Cash for Kids	St Margaret's Church, Newlands, Glasgow	Glasgow/Galloway Diocese Mothers' Union
St Patrick's Day Charity Ball Committee	Lend Lease Guv'nors Charity	Garfield Weston Foundation
The Volant Trust	Foundation Scotland	Children in Need
Seaforth Sanatorium Trust	Souter Charitable Trust	Comic Relief
Arnold Clark	Peter Vardy Foundation	Saints and Sinners Club of Scotland
The Sim Trust	The Robertson Trust	Glasgow Care Foundation
The Adamson Trust	The Volant Trust	Mr and Mrs Scott
Hugh Stenhouse Foundation	B and I Davidson	M MacGilp
H MacGilp	T and D Williamson	C Corfield
E Hannah	J O'Connor	Mugdock Children's Trust
Gordon Fraser Trust	Hugh Fraser Foundation	P Larking
3Ls Students Association, University of Strathclyde	Bellahouston Bequest Fund	The Moffat Charitable Trust
Awards for All	M. McGraw	MacRobert Trust
Sainsbury's	P Waterson	B Bowman
Gannett Foundation	Gemmell Bequest Fund	Dunsyre Children's Holiday Camp

and a big thanks to the many other volunteers, hosts, escorts, staff, committee members and Trustees who have served the children of Glasgow through the Holiday Scheme over the decades.

The story behind the logo

In 2003 children were asked to design a logo for the holiday scheme. The winner turned out to be a 13-year-old girl from Paisley:

The girl designed our initials: GCHS.

The G is her school tie which she takes off the C is a castle; The S is for the sea, but it's also green for the countryside; the H had a train going through a tunnel to a Host family by the sea (the blue wavy lines). So she would take off her tie, get on the train and leave her worries behind.



The original drawing of our logo



Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme

Pentagon Centre
36-38 Washington Street
Glasgow G3 8AZ

Telephone 0141 248 7255

www.glasgowchildrensholidayscheme.org.uk
email: admin@glasgowchildrensholidayscheme.org.uk



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