

# 'Briar & Bothies'

The newsletter of
HE KEARVAIG PIPE CLUB



# G. T. Coventry, Kirkcaldy Review: Much More Than a Splendid Tobacconist...

Nestled at the eastern end of Kirkcaldy's High Street there sits a cosy-looking specialist Tobacconist and secondhand bookshop of repute, owned and run by Mr. Maclean-John Dorward. The simple, unimposing, and yet intriguing shopfront of this emporium at 310 High Street, has an inherent 'oldworldly' feel but gives little clue to the casual observer as to the treasures that lay inside.

Emporium is a word often over-used to pretentiously 'fluff-up' many an unremarkable retail premises, but in the case of G T Coventry's, 'emporium' would be an understatement, as during a 5-hour visit I was to witness characters and scenes that would not be out of place in a Harold Pinter play, or perhaps a particularly colourful episode of Mr Benn. Shopping at G T Coventry's is truly an antidote to our age of bland mediocrity, widgets and 'social-media'.

### History of the shop

From 1720, 310 High Street, Kirkcaldy was a horse-powered mill, where the horses ran up and down to the beach providing power to the mill to grind all manner of goods, predominantly grain to produce flour. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century it was a chemist and druggists before becoming a hatters in the 1890s.

It was in 1906 that the shop became a tobacconists and has retained its primary function to this day. Mr. Maclean-John Dorward, formerly a chef, publican, restaurateur, research scientist and college lecturer bought the shop in 2002 and has run it as a tobacconist and bookshop for the last 10 years. **Cont. p.2** 





"Fortunately, members of the KPC know the value of everything and the cost of nothing..."

# G. T. Coventry, Kirkcaldy Review: Cont.

### G. T. Coventry today

The first thing that hits you as you open the shop door is the wonderful aroma emanating from the myriad of tobaccos on sale. If it were possible to bottle that scent it would make someone a small fortune. In fact people have been known just to come in, take a deep breath or two and then walk out again. Atop the wonderfully worn and hobnail scarred wooden floor sits a lot of the original wooden display cabinets and cases. Some newer joinery can be seen, however, if one looks closely, but the overall effect is a measured, comforting world of stained wood and dusty glass, wonderfully free from ghastly primary colours that are so often found in vulgar plastic moulded dollops along our high streets.

KPC members will, naturally, be most interested in the piperelated products of the shop, but Chaps who like the odd cigar or snort will be pleased to know that the shop boasts a substantial range of cigars, snuff and chewing tobacco. Some ready-made cigarettes and a sizeable range of handrolling tobaccos are also stocked for customers who can be spotted by their sartorial penchant for track-suit bottoms.

The pipe tobacco ranges of Gawith Hoggarth and Samuel Gawith form the backbone of the loose tobaccos on sale, weighed out in front of the customer on a beautiful old set of mechanical Avery scales – no digital nonsense here with the added bonus that a Chap can even purchase an ounce of his favourite blend during a power cut! Maclean says that his best seller is Gawith Hoggarth's 'Exclusiv Black Cherry' closely followed by McLintock's 'Orange Dream'.





A vast and colourful array of tinned and packet pipe tobacco adorn the crowded shelves behind the main counter like a puffers kaleidoscope.

Manufacturers represented include: Alsbo, Ashtons, Borkum Riff, Clan, Condor, Dunhill, Gold Block, Holland House, J F Germain & Son, Mf Lintock's, Parson's Pleasure, Presbyterian Mixture, Rattrays, Robert Lewis, Samuel Gawith, Three Nuns, W O Larsen and more. In other words a Chap would have no problem finding a suitable blend to raise a cloud. Maclean has forgotten more about tobacco products than must of us will ever know, and he also stocks a wide selection of pipes and smoker's requisites at prices agreeable to all wallets.

The other part of the shop is 'Ye Olde Book Shop' that sells secondhand books and DVDs with an emphasis on Scottish history and other quirky subjects. In fact when looking at the DVD's on sale it would be possible for a Chap to drive a steam locomotive, build a bridge or pilot a Lancaster bomber after just one visit. **Cont. p.3** 

"There can be no doubt that smoking nowadays is largely a miserable automatic business. People use tobacco without ever taking an intelligent interest in it. They do not experiment, compare, fit the tobacco to the occasion. A man should always be pleasantly conscious of the fact that he is smoking."

# G. T. Coventry, Kirkcaldy Review: cont.

### A day out at G T Coventry's, 30/11/12

It is without question that the convivial atmosphere of G T Coventry is entirely down to its proprietor. It was a bright and sunny November lunchtime for my second visit to the shop and I was greeted warmly by Maclean; an all-round 'good egg', a Chap quick to smile, and even quicker to tell a yarn – tobacco-related or otherwise. On my first visit in October I had mentioned the KPC and inquired about photographing and doing an article about the shop for B&B, an idea to which Maclean agreed to without hesitation.

Whist photographing the premises a steady stream of local customers (Maclean says about 99% of the shop's trade is repeat local customers) came in; some dashing in and out furtively (mostly the young Chaps purchasing king-size Rizlas...) with others lingering for a wee blether or just a sniff of the atmosphere. The clientele varied from seasoned, elderly Chaps to victims of 'care in the community' schemes and the odd Non-Educated Delinquent, all skilfully met with charm, tact and patience by Maclean. Whether you are in your tweeds or, (heaven forbid Ed.), 'trackies' and plimsolls, the high standards of customer service at G T Coventry are applied equally in this splendidly egalitarian emporium.

My photo-journalistic sojourn was almost over when a couple of colourful local characters of note breezed in. First was Ambrose; a well known colourful local hair-dresser, pole-dancing tutor and pipe-smoker – he has an impressive sixty-two pipes in his collection. His somewhat 'sportswear-appearance' soon yielded to a wonderfully flamboyant and camp persona, and he was more than happy to tell a few pipe-tales, cigar stories and eye-brow-raising boudoir exploits. He even put up a stout defence of his choice of tobacco, namely the cheap packet brand of 'Cube'. Of course being in a journalistic capacity during our meeting forbade any judgement on my part at the time, but I cannot help but wonder if Ambrose has been seduced himself by Cube's modern-style packaging that appeared to be well suited to Chaps spending the 'pink-pound'? Whatever his choice in leaf Ambrose is a fine fellow and would be welcome round the bothy fire to share a colourful tale.

Next in was Louisa; a tiny platinum-blonde-power-pack of well-inebriated energy. Being a retired drama teacher, Louisa was not drunk or tipsy, it was, as she repeatedly insisted, just a case of a "libation or two". Maclean and the Chaps present enjoyed her brave attempt at hiding the fact that she was simply steaming. Naturally, Louisa soon veered into the realms of theatre as she started off with Macbeth and then, mocking this Chap's southern accent, she rapidly became Eliza Doolittle from Pygmalion. For a few glorious minutes she had all present spellbound, although some of the regular customers who had simply wandered in for a packet of smokes might have dwelled a little longer, as they seemed a little anxious at her flamboyant prancing that would have been more appropriate on the set of a musical than a specialist tobacconist. After a purchase of some ready-rolled cigarettes (*if only she'd smoked a pipe... Ed.*) Louisa flounced out in as dramatic a fashion as she'd come in. An afternoon's splendid entertainment was over all too soon, and I was left looking forward to my next visit to this unique and special tobacconist. In conclusion I think you'll find that a trip to G T Coventry is time well spent, and is so much more that just another dull 'shopping experience'. **See photographs on pp. 4 – 6.** 

### Making a purchase of one's favourite blend and accoutrements

G T Coventry is highly recommended to KPC members. **Indeed, Maclean is offering a 10% discount on smoker's requisites (not tobacco as the profit margins are simply too tight) to KPC members who present a copy of Briar & Bothies in the shop.** A brief perusal of stock in the shop showed reasonable prices all round. The method of trading is strictly analogue as, refreshingly, G T Coventry does not accept any cards and has no website. Therefore the best way to make a purchase is to open the door, walk in, take a sniff, enjoy the experience and part with a little cash. Alternatively, a Chap can telephone the shop to place an order over the phone which will be then posted at warp-speed. After receiving the merchandise, a Chap, rather splendidly, just has to post a cheque. (Of course the added bonus here is that banks hate cheques due to the costs involved, and it could be argued that this form of trading is verging on subversive these days – splendid what! Ed.)

G. T, Coventry, 310 High Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1LB Tel: 01592 263 431

- Bosnian proverb

At your service: Maclean-John Dorward, Proprietor, G. T. Coventry





"A good specialist tobacconist is a rare oasis in the modern High Street desert" - Sgt. Matron, KPC

Happy customers: Louisa and Ambrose enjoy a visit to G. T. Coventry...



Something for everyone at G. T. Coventry; Learn how to fly a Lancaster whilst having a bowl!





"It is not enough to fill a pipe and put it to the mouth and set fire to it, for even the country bumpkin knows as much. It is only correct to hold it with the left hand, have the right hand provided with the stopper, impress the onlookers with majestic mien, sit in the proper attitude on the chair, and finally, to take enough time for each pipe and not treat with hasty irreverence this heavenly food."

-Peter Burmann on pipe etiquette, c. 1710

Page 5











"As the priest is characterized by his cassock, so the smoker by his pipe. The way in which he holds it, raises it to his lips, and knocks out the ashes, reveals his personality, habits, passions, and even his thoughts."

# G. T. Coventry & The KPC Team Up For a Competition!

Following the Briar & Bothies visit to G T Coventry we have the pleasure in announcing a competition for KPC members and B&B readers alike to win a brand new 8oz stainless-steel hip flask, kindly donated by Maclean at G T Coventry.

FIND THE 20 WORDS IN THE WORD-PUZZLE BOX USING THE CLUES BELOW. WORDS CAN BE VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL, DIAGONAL AND WRITTEN BACKWARDS.

### KPC & G T Coventry Word-Puzzle Competition

I E Ι N I K S N N A L KR 0 V A Η AAG A U PU RAL K Z M E U KAHE HKR BA 0 Ι MU S SKI H A P E P D M L D AMORAWBXMYR KDSBREGATQAHBDF The G. T. Coventry Competition prize: A Café Crème 8oz hip flask



#### Word puzzle clues:

- 1. Spiritual home of the KPC? (8)
- 2. Rudimentary shelter? (5)
- 3. Class of pipe tobacco with sweet, pungent smell. (8)
- 4. Where your fill of pipe tobacco goes. (4)
- 5. Pipe shape favoured by religious types? (12)
- 6. Scottish Borders river, and essential woollen fabric for the Chap. (5)
- 7. Card game, fireside tool and well-known pipe shape. (5)
- 8. Type of smoky tobacco associated with Syria and Cyprus. (7)
- 9. Type of pipe tobacco only grown in St James parish, Louisiana, US. (7)
- 10. Surname of author and pipe-smoker known for inventing 'the halfling's leaf?
- 11. White mineral used to make pipes. (10)
- 12. US state named after tobacco variety? (8)
- 13. New York based band combining 'rap' and type of music often associated with 12 (12)
- 14. Quintessential straight pipe shape (needing a cue?) for a Chap (8)
- 15. Quintessential straight pipe shape for a Spitfire or Hurricane pilot? (5)
- 16. Wood commonly used for making pipes. (5)
- 17. Surname of the proprietor of the best specialist tobacconist in Kirkcaldy. (7)
- 18. Favoured eyewear of Patrick Moore. (7)
- 19. Common name for plants from the genus Nicotiana. (7)
- 20. 'Supermarket brand' of aromatic tobacco suitable for ancient tribes of Highlanders? (4)

### Competition rules:

- 1. Only one entry per Chap.
- 2. There will be only one winner.
- 3. The answers must be marked in black pen on the original or a photocopy of the original.
- 4. Entries must be posted or e-mailed to arrive with the Editor on or before 01 March 2013. Entries received after 01 March 2013 will not be counted.

If multiple correct entries are returned, the corresponding names from Chaps submitting correct entries will be recorded on parchment, folded and placed into a deerstalker or tweed cap and the winner will be drawn at random by the Editor.

A Borders Bothy & Briar Review: Four Phaw Over at

Over Phawhope, 01/12/12

After the KPC and Bothy Council office party the evening before in Dunfermline, four rather jaded KPC members headed south in search of an ice-bound borders bothy and briar beano.

Conditions underfoot were slippery and regular displays of 'jazz-hands' were a feature of the short walk in. Being an MBA bothy the interior was a full-on austerity offering, so loved of the queer folk that venture outdoors to flagellate themselves in the name of enjoyment. However, with the creative flair and experience of years of sleeping in hovels, the KPC members present soon hand-crafted a decent bothy-table and helped by a roaring stove a more agreeable environ was soon hewn out of the bleakness.

During the evening 'Over Phawhope' was cunningly renamed 'Hope Ah Phaw Over', which seemed to capture the mood, general condition, and ultimate destination of the KPC members present.

The evening was most successful once the little stove soon alleviated the considerable chill from the damp bothy and KPC members transformed themselves into veritable *fume gallants* as a range of aromatics, non-aromatics were sampled, along with a selection of beverages in accompaniment. A particularly fine effort was made in preparation of bothy-pizza. See p. 9 for a photo-montage of the evening..

### <u>Hope Ah Phaw Over Bothy Review Scorecard</u> (out of 5):

Building fabric = \*\*\*

Fireplace = V V

Facilities =

Cosiness =

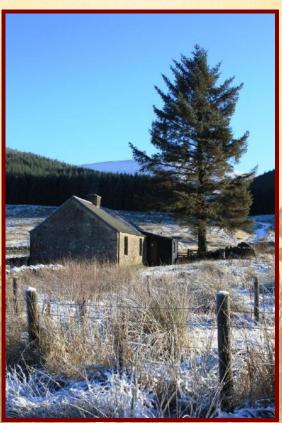
Pipe friendliness=

Talkin' pish? Moi? Bingae holds court at Over Phawhope









"...pipe smoking is properly an intellectual exercise."

-Christopher Morley, 1916

### Let me see your pipe face!

KPC members bring some cheer to the MBA bleakness with some choice blends at Hope Ah Phaw Over Bothy.







KPC TOP - The early pipe sessions









New Definitions for pipe smokers part 1:

'Pipe tool/tamper' = 'Dottle-smasher' - Bingae, KPC & Bothy Council

### TOBACCO & PIPE OF THE MONTH

This month we bring you a brand new blend - a just released aromatic from Samuel Gawith - and the sturdy no-nonsense classic Great British Bulldog to stuff it into.

# Samuel Gawith's 2013 Limited Edition



From the manufacturer: A specially selected blend of Virginia tobaccos together with some Black Cavendish and some good quality burley tobacco with a vanilla crème flavour.

To compliment this already smooth blend a soupcon of almond essence has been added. The result is a very smooth, medium strength tobacco with a good volume of smoke and a delightful room note. Limited edition of only 15,000 tins worldwide.

#### **Review:**

The tin note is very nutty and that is the dominant taste throughout the bowl. A pleasant easy-smoking aromatic well presented in an elegant tin.

Strength:

VV

Flavour:

*y y y y* 

Room note:

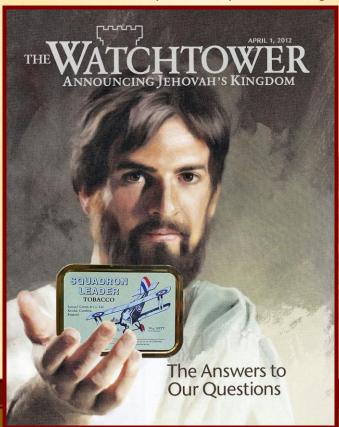
VVVV

### The Bulldog



The Bulldog is most definitely a stout lump of wood, and a good addition to any Chap's *fumatorium*. It is usually straight or curved and, as with most pipes, comes in a variety of finishes; but the classic shape is the straight, smooth, finish pictured above. The concentric-ring-scored bulbous bowl and diamond shank are the trademark features of the Bulldog.

When not in smoking use the Bulldog is a sturdy beast, and can be used in the event of a puncture to lever your bicycle tyres off or knock in your tent pegs in hard ground. It would also be the weapon of choice for poking those pious, pesky Jehovah's Witnesses in the eye when they come knocking.



"You have proved it is a very moral habit."

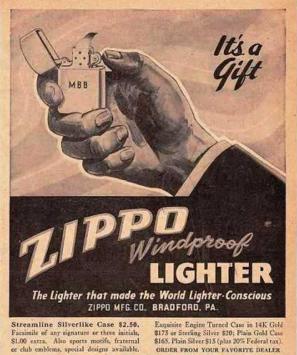
-Benjamin Disraeli to Colonel Webster after the latter complained that pipe smoking had prevented more illicit liaisons than fears of duels or divorce

## Pipe Babe of the Month

If a Chap bumped into Sally down by the loch-side whilst doing a spot of fishing, I think he would be forgiven for dropping his flies and trying his luck on catching something else that day...







LIFETIME GUARANTEED - NO ONE EVER PAID A CENT TO REPAIR A ZIPPO

"Smoke. Smoke. Smoke. Only a pipe distinguishes man from beast."



### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

A forum for KPC members to share their thoughts regarding all things briar, rudimentary shelter, and anything else of pressing import.

### **PIPE LAVATION SALVATION!**

Dear Sir,

In this modern world of technological obsession (what with electronic smoking devices and state-of-the-art cigarettes that deploy a minty flavour upon one squeeze of the filter), it is with sadness that a time-served pipe-smoking Chap of discernibility may be finding tribulation in locating a reliable haberdashery that is committed to supplying one's required pipe-smoking lavation apparatus in abundance.

Yes, I am referring to the humble pipe-cleaner which slowly appears to becoming more obsolete these days on the local high street, as well as in the vulgar supermarket.

Fear not, however, for your astute servant has located a regular and loyal boutique that stocks them in opulence. Not only that, but the choice and range of colours and lengths available will service the cleaning requirements of every type of pipe smoker imaginable – from the loyal churchwarden enthusiast to the full bent briar smoking homosexual, as well as to the womanizing, estate pipe-smoking cad about town.

The location of said boutique is none other than the local 'Early Learning Centre' where it appears that children are fortunately being indoctrinated into the noble art of pipe smoking at a very young pre-school age indeed (I believe they also use them for making stick-like models of animals and people).

It was by chance that I happened upon this regular source of supply whilst shuffling along the high street one afternoon after consuming way too many adult refreshments at the local honky-tonk, where I mistakenly thought I saw a Jimmy Savile lookalike make a direct frantic B-line towards the entrance of the aforementioned establishment.

Rather quickly my concerns for child safety were extinguished as I peered through the window and spotted an entire shelf devoted to pipe-smoking lavation devices. I quickly approached an exiting single-mother of questionable intellect and, slipping her a tenner, tried unsuccessfully to convince her to purchase several packs of these devices on my behalf (for some reason she seemed to think I was requesting her services for an act of fellatio). Fortunately, since then, I have convinced a local childcare worker to regularly purchase them on my behalf.

I think we can all agree that the length and colour selections available are most satisfactory indeed, and I would strongly urge all KPC members to find a trustworthy individual to purchase these devices at one's request (bearded men with soup-stained ties and grubby Macintoshes are probably best avoided).

Yours sincerely,

Colonel Hydrocarbon





Dear Colonel,

Thank you for bringing this critical issue to the attention of KPC members. As we all know, a good, sweet, smoke depends on successful lavation of a Chap's pipe, so it is good to know of a new High Street vendor of pipe cleaners for this purpose. It is also comforting to see a chain store cast-off the shackles of the 'nanny-state' and start our youngsters early on the hallowed path of the briar. Hopefully they will seek further enlightenment and start stocking junior-tobacco to further help youngsters along presently. Ed.



### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR cont.**

### **MONOCLE SAVES THE DAY!**

Dear Sir,

Just received the latest issue of B&B, delivered by those stalwarts at Royal Mail. It was particularly well-timed, as I have just recently purchased a new Monocle, which I used to peruse the latest edition. Those Bothy-Chaps had some pimply buttocks; either that or some paint had been splashed on my monocle.

I used my new eyewear to enhance my experience of the back issues of Briar & Bothies, and quite frankly I am really glad I did, because I thought there had already been photographs of "coonsilling" in *Vol.1 Iss.1 p. 3.* I refer to a photograph of what I first thought was an arse with a Churchwarden sticking out of it, but thanks to my new ocular enhancement I discovered it was actually an image of our dear Matron exhibiting his pipe pus. It made me laugh when I realised the error I had made.

Yours,

Cpl. Punishment

Dear Corporal,

I am so glad that that you have managed to correct you visual impairment with such a stylish piece of 'eyeppratus' and that your misinterpretation of said photograph has been suitably corrected. The editorial team now considers this matter well and truly closed. Ed.

Sir,

The words "dandy" and "beano" are Victorianisms: the first for a peacock male or sparkling excellence ("fine and dandy"), and the second for a 'bean-feast' or celebration.

I ask, beseech, nae, implore that fine words like these make there way into future issues of B&B.

Yours in pipe-smoke,

Uncle Jesse (We'll see what we can do... Ed.)

### DON'T FORGET BOMBER COMMAND!

Dear Sir,

I felt that I had to send you my heartfelt congratulations on my recent mailings. I refer of course to the paper copies of the Briar & Bothies newsletters.

I was alerted to your illustrious newsletter by the grandson of my former Batman (or was it Robin, no no it was definitely Batman. Robin was that beastly oick who made me suck and blow his pipe at Eton and by pipe I am not referring to his cherrywood either, ahem).

As one of, if not the only surviving members of the Royal Flying Corps, I (to use the modern vernacular) 'blagged' my way in aged 12. I was quite tall for my age and used my fathers spent leaf which I rubbed into my cheeks to form a more than passable 5 o'clock shadow, thus managing to fool the powers-that-be into training me as a pilot. Forgive the meanderings of an old man and allow me to cut to the chase, namely your superb article of how the Briar helped to win the Battle of Britain. I was enthralled by it; a true journalistic triumph.

I could not help but wonder ,would it be at all possible, at some later stage, through the auspicious pages of your worthy newsletter to do a similar article on those wonderful Chaps, who up until recently were treated as the poor relation to the 'Spit' and 'Hurri' boys? I of course refer to the heroes of Bomber Command; Chaps like Bomber Harris and Guy Gibson (see enclosed photograph - *below Ed.*). Those boys certainly knew how to light up a briar, just ask any one who survived Dresden!

Yours,

Major Bedd, DFC, MM, RFC (Retd.)



**Guy Gibson** VC, DSO(bar), DFC(bar), & Top Chap

Dear Major,

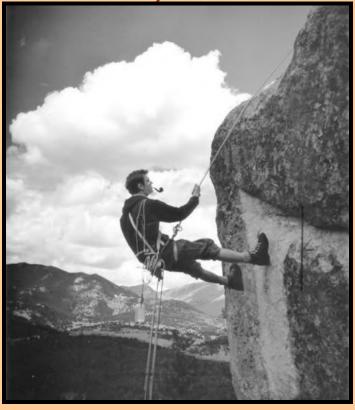
Always good to hear from an RFC Chap, and I'm heartened that you enjoyed the 'Briar in the Battle of Britain' article in Vol. 1 Iss. 5. Of course you are correct in that Bomber Command has been overlooked in many ways, not least how those Chaps were stiffened in their resolve by the briar. The Editorial team will begin research immediately into this neglected area. Ed.

# EXTREME PIPE SMOKING!

The KPC editorial team are pleased to bring you a new, occasional series showing Chaps and Chapettes insufflating their briars in some testing situations.

KPC members are invited to send in photographs of any of their extreme pipe smoking activities. (*i.e. not sitting on one's backside in a bothy Ed.*) Indeed KPC members will also be pleased to note that Debbie, the unforgettable 'Cairngorm Pipe Babe' and (the slightly less unforgettable – *still a good egg though Ed.*), Matthew Dieumegard-Thornton (who kindly submitted the picture below to B&B) will be assisting by deploying their briars during some breath-taking mountain-capers. We await their efforts with intense anticipation!

This hill-Chap shows how the addition of the briar adds a touch of class to a tricky abseil. Of course his personal safety is also enhanced as the smoke from his bowl makes a splendid anemometer, allowing him to brace for any sudden maelstroms!



### **KPC Notices**

Due to this month's substantial mailbag and the extensive G T Coventry article and competition, a few regular features and scheduled articles have had to be postponed until future issues. It has been a busy time for our club, and the Editorial team thank you for your patience if you have been looking forward to a particular article.

KPC t-shirts still available from the Editor at the bargain price of £12-99 + P&P.

All letters to the Editor, articles and other correspondence should be addressed to:

The Editor
The Kearvaig Pipe Club
Kearvaig
Cape Wrath
BR1 AR5

Or electronic (if you must) communication to: kearvaigpipeclub@btinternet.com

### **KPC Future Moots**

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2013 – Dazbo's birthday bash: EJMCS 'The Cabin', Balgowan, Laggan. £7 pppn Details from Sergeant Matron.

**Uncle Jesse's Stag-do:** 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the Knoydart Music Festival. Details from the Uncle Jesse's Best Man and KPC member Dazbo. Supporting the KPC will be Bombskare, the Peatbog Faeries and others.

**25**<sup>th</sup> **May 2013** The Kearvaig Pipe Club will be performing at Easdale Island. Support: Shooglenifty.

### Coming In the next edition of Briar & Bothies:

- Pipe of the month
- ▼ Tobacco of the month
- ✓ Chap's Corner
- ✓ Pipe Babe of the month
- Famous Pipe Smoker
- Famous dead Pipe Smoker
- **✓** Raitts Bothy review
- ✓ Official Cake of the KPC