

T H Tait Painter
Painter 26 High St
Gatehouse
Sep 26th 1946

Gatehouse Welcome Home Dinner
The Town Hall --- presentation
of cheques 1936-1945 WAR

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Wall inscription on downstairs left bedroom at Woodlyn

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1946.

Notice in Galloway News 21 Sep 1946

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BURGH OF GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET.

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GATEHOUSE WELCOME HOME.

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The PRESENTATION of SCROLLS and GIFTS will take place in the RUTHERFORD HALL, Gatehouse, on 27th September, 1946, at 7 p.m., and will be followed by a DINNER in the TOWN HALL, Gatehouse.

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Beneficiaries under the Scheme, who duly notified their intention of being present, may be accompanied by one relative or friend at the Presentation Ceremony in the Rutherford Hall.

N. B. M., Hon. Secy.

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Bank of Scotland House,
Gatehouse-of-Fleet,
16th September, 1946.

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GREAT HOMECOMING WELCOME

INSPIRING TRIBUTE TO SERVICE PERSONNEL

Generous Community Rejoices at Re-union

A remarkable demonstration of public thanksgiving for war services was staged at Gatehouse on Friday evening when the official welcome was given to personnel from the burgh and district who had played their part in the achievement of the greatest of all victories which had saved the world from oppression and tyranny. Since the inauguration of parish and district movements to mark in tangible form the community's sense of indebtedness to those who had served, Gatehouse was well in the forefront. A feature of the efforts was a free gift sale in the organisation of which Mrs Murray-Usher played a leading part, and which realised the handsome sum of £1700. The representative committee which carried through the fund-raising efforts was under the chairmanship of Provost Stewart with Mrs Murray-Usher as secretary and the Rev. A. J. Easton as treasurer. Later the latter duties were overaken by Mr N. B. M'Ainsh and Mr Andrew Crosbie respectively.

The arrangements for the reception provided for two functions, the first being of a thanksgiving character, held in the Rutherford Hall, and at which the presentation of scrolls and cheques for ten gns. each was made. This was followed by a dinner in the Town Hall. It was disclosed that a total of 194 men and women from the burgh and district were on service and of this number fully a hundred attended Friday night's festivities. Some time previously gifts of £5 each were presented by the local Branch of the British Legion.

Welcome and Presentations

Provost A. A. Stewart presided over the large company which assembled in the Rutherford Hall for the first part of the proceedings, many friends of the service guests also being present. The platform party included Mrs Stewart, Bailie and Miss Veitch, Bailie and Mrs M'ulloch, Councillors Mrs Murray-Usher, Mrs Little, Colonel and Mrs Armstrong, Mr and Mrs Davidson, Mr and Mrs Graham, and Mr Allan Stewart; Mr and Mrs Watson, Rev. A. J. and Mrs Easton, Rev. J. and Mrs Turnbull, Major and Mrs D. C. Cochrane, Colonel and Mrs Rainsford-Hannay, Mr and Mrs M'Ainsh, Mr Andrew Crosbie, Mrs J. F. Sproat, Mr and Mrs T. H. M'Gaw, Mr and Mrs S. B. Crosbie, Mr W. Bryan.

The proceedings opened with the singing of "O God of Bethel" and prayer, offered by the Rev. John Turnbull.

The Provost, in his introductory remarks, said in the celebration of a home-coming such as they were holding that night, it was but appropriate that before rejoicing there should be thanksgiving. In looking back over the road along which they had come they were chilled by thoughts of what might have been and thankful that they had reached that point. There was a sorrow when they remembered those who would never return and they had sympathy for the bereaved. It was therefore but fitting to begin their proceedings by recalling the cost of victory in the lives of the fallen. He then called on the Rev. A. J. Easton to pay tribute to those who had made the supreme sacrifice.

A Touching Eulogy

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Rev. Mr Easton in a deeply touching eulogy to the fallen said:—

As we who went out from this community are welcomed home officially by our fellow citizens of Gatehouse and district, by those whose work lay in the burgh, and among the hills and valleys of Anwoth and Girthon — keeping "the home fires burning," ploughing the extra acres, and most difficult of all, keeping the nerves and hearts strong for this great day of returning. — it behoves us with you to pay solemn tribute to those, our brothers, whose war services has cost them their lives. We are used to being told that Victory is only won at a price; but when that price is paid in the lives of our dearest friends, then the truth comes home to us right heavily. These, the sons of our homes, the companions of our schooldays, the comrades of our endeavours, these are now our heroes. And it is as such we honour them to-night.

They were ordinary fellows like the rest of us, but in the hour of mankind's need they were found where the danger was greatest, and they paid the highest price that a man can pay—they gave their lives. In their death they brought Victory and Honour, both to themselves and to us whose privilege it is now to remember; and always they will hold high place in our affection. Their honour is our heritage.

Mr Easton then quoted the stirring passage of Rupert Brooke in "Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!" and asked the audience to be understanding to pay their personal tribute in a minute's silence, adding the famous words "They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we shall remember them."

Following the silent tribute Mr Easton concluded. "Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for ever."

The Garden of Memory

The Provost said it was hoped before long a beauty spot would be made at the top of the town which, by being a place of flowers associated with the present war memorial there, would perpetuate the memory of the fallen in the recent war, and would be a place of quiet retreat, to be known as the Garden of Memory.

They in Gatehouse felt very proud that from their small town and surrounding countryside no fewer than just over 200 people left their homes and were called upon to play a vital part in the defence of their country. There was always the danger of thinking of our country in an impersonal way, and great evil might arise if they thought of the State without being conscious of the men and women who composed it. It seemed to him, therefore, to be an excellent thing to keep in mind the individual, and to recognise personally those to whom so much was due. Their action in accepting freely the call to service, and in loyally and faithfully carrying through the tasks allotted to them, whether pleasant or unpleasant, easy or difficult, hazardous or safe, menial or dignified, had brought the fruits of victory.

Cause for Thankfulness

None of them might be the least bit conscious of being a hero or heroine, but they ought to be, and no doubt were conscious of having done their bit, and sometimes doing one's bit was a task of much endurance. Very often the unspectacular part was a very hard part to play. While they were away those at home had their experiences too. Some of those experiences were of a kind that would take a lot of telling. Sufficient to say that, while they still laboured under restrictions, there was great relief when black-outs, restricted lighting, Home Guard duties, and various other civil defence

duties became things of the past, and they were very glad that those things, together with their experiences of evacuees, were now over.

As a result of their experience and of what they had seen, many of their ideas too had altered considerably. He might be on dangerous ground if he were to particularise as to how ideas had changed, but he thought he was quite safe in saying that most people decided that the post-war world would not be a repeat of the pre-war conditions, and that they would not fail, as after the previous war, to change their ways and their points of view so as to win the peace.

Planning for the Future

During the war, beyond doing their bit from day to day, there was very little that they could do to further matters. That was due to the hampering and restricting conditions of life made necessary. One of the few things they could do was to plan for the days ahead, new houses being priority No. 1. That they had done, and he would suggest that, for a place the size of Gatehouse, the building of 68 new houses in the first year's building programme seemed not a bad beginning. In addition to such planning, much effort had been expended in other directions. A great effort was made to bring a little industry there. In this connection Mr Stewart Paton of the Anwoth Hotel, who had done so much to improve the amenity at the bridge, Mrs Murray Usher and Mr Robert Frew had done all that was humanly possible. If their efforts had not been successful, it was not for want of trying, but the fact to be borne in mind was that the struggle to a better state of matters had in many directions only just begun.

While it was true that the creation of conditions to make another war impossible or a world conflict with citadels in London, Paris, Moscow, and Washington, it was also true that there was a local issue in every town and village, and he would urge them to bring to the benefit of their neighbours that knowledge and experience of the larger life from which they had just returned. In local government it did not do merely to sit back and criticise, but they must do all they could to make their views effective. By doing so they would govern themselves and help to foster among men, who did not see eye to eye, an understanding which was of the same nature as the understanding between nations, making co-operation possible and producing that harmony in action which made a good definition of the peace they were trying to win.

Sincerity of Welcome

There was something else that was done during the war years, and which came to fruition that night. That was to prepare a welcome for those spared to return to their midst. He believed he expressed the attitude of those who spent the war in the seclusion of Gatehouse, sheltered from the destruction of the enemy's bombing attacks, when he said they were anxious to see that their words of welcome would not be mere empty words, but that there should be a token of sincerity with them in admiration of the part they had played. When their effort was made to raise a Welcome Home Fund, it was responded to most enthusiastically by all the people in the town, and also by those who lived in the landward areas. Unless he conveyed to them the warmth of feeling and that sincerity of welcome he would consider himself as failing in his task. They knew it was the spirit in which a gift was offered which made it valued and acceptable. From the sincere regard for their welfare and from the genuine happiness at their safe return, which he trusted was apparent, he was confident that all that

was being done to welcome them home would be interpreted as in the right spirit, so that whatever shortcomings there might be, lack of cordiality would certainly not be one of them.

It was very pleasing to him to be able to intimate that Mrs Murray Usher was with them that night, and had agreed to hand over the cheques and the scrolls. Mrs Murray Usher was secretary of the Welcome Home Committee during the time of the free gift sale, and knowing what a great work she had done to make that sale a success, far beyond their expectations, it was particularly gratifying that she was able to be present.

The Presentations

Mrs Murray Usher, before making the presentations, said it was a very great privilege to be associated with that Welcome Home celebration. She heartily endorsed what the Provost had said in regard to everyone feeling there was no lack of cordiality. Their sale had been a most inspiring effort, everybody working with immense enthusiasm. There had been no difficulty at all, because everybody pulled the same way. They were delighted to welcome so many home that evening. She was afraid they would not find the world the same as it was when they left; nothing was the same, but if they all shared the responsibilities—and it was most important they should make it their own personal responsibility—and all pulled together, with God's help they could not fail.

The cheques and scrolls were then presented, each recipient being welcomed by the Provost and the gifts handed over by Mrs Murray Usher. A special reception was given to Major E. M. W. Cliff M'Culloch, Kirkcaldy, who was seated in his invalid chair at the rear of the hall. When his name was called out Mrs Murray Usher took the certificate to him and extended a special word of congratulation, to the accompaniment of prolonged applause. Major Cliff M'Culloch had the distinction of being one of the youngest Majors in the Army and saw much service in Burma.

The scrolls, a pleasing artistic souvenir, were inscribed as follows:—The people of Gatehouse place on record their high appreciation of the service given to the nation by during the world war 1939-45. They remembered with lasting gratitude the rally made to the defence of the world's liberties, the costly sacrifice of those who fell, the valour of the nation's

forces that brought victory in the end, and all the patience, courage, and endurance of those years in which this patriot played a noble part.

On the call of the Provost, a cordial vote of thanks was given to Mrs Murray Usher, and this part of the evening's proceedings was concluded with the singing of "Land of Hope and Glory." The accompaniments for the praise were played by Mrs T. H. M'Gaw.

The Dinner

The second part of the evening's programme took the form of a dinner in the Town Hall, which was profusely decorated with national flags and bunting, the setting being one of the most colourful ever seen locally for such occasions. The attractively appointed tables and the excellence of the dinner service reflected particular credit on Mrs Murchie and staff, Murray Arms Hotel. Provost Stewart again presided, and was accompanied at the principal table by members of the Committee and other officials who were present at the presentation ceremony.

Following dinner, a well-arranged toast list was eloquently honoured. Provost Stewart submitted the loyal toast, and then proposed "Our Guests" in a fine oration, which was enthusiastically received. Replies were made by Mr G. I. Holmes (Navy), Mr John M. Ferguson (Army), Mr Eric C. D. Davidson (Air Force), and Miss Sadie M'Murray (Women's Services). "The Burgh of Gatehouse" was proposed by Major D. C. Cochrane, who made a stirring appeal to the young people to make their influence felt in the running of local affairs. There was much to be done if Gatehouse was to prosper, and if those things they fought for and hoped for were to come to pass. Bailie R. Veitch replied.

The health of the ladies was pledged after a masterly tribute by Bailie A. E. Cliff M'Culloch, and a memorable celebration was concluded with the hearty singing of "Auld Lang Syne." Much pleasure was also afforded during the evening by vocal contributions by Mrs J. F. Sproat and Mr T. H. M'Gaw, the accompaniments being played by Mrs M'Gaw.