

Maggie's MAILBAG

If you have views and opinions on any subject that interests, amuses or irritates you, write to Maggie's Mailbag, "Evening Express," Lang Stracht, Mastrick, Aberdeen, AB9 8AF.

Hello — and a big thank you for all your tootsie tales. They grace the pages this week — and more next week — and I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I enjoyed receiving them.

My first prize-winner is Mrs Mary Hogg who lives in Balmagask House, North Balmagask Road, Torry. It's an old folk's home and Mary has been there for just under a year.

She was surprised and delighted to hear she'd won because she had thought her letter wouldn't arrive in time—but it did and I found her memories told through the types of shoes she wore as she grew older, quite enchanting.

It occurs to me that some of you may

remember Mary as she was a modern languages teacher at Turriff Academy. She taught French, German and Spanish and in her eighty-sixth year admits regretfully that she no longer has anyone to practise on. Few foreigners visit Balmagask House.

Her prize came at just the right time. Mary has been having trouble with her feet recently — probably brought on by trying to think up something to write about for the competition — and she needs a new pair of comfortable shoes. One of the nurses will go to Timpson's when he writes this time, she thinks, she'll choose a bigger size.

Second prize of gift vouchers to the

value of £15 goes to Mrs M. Murray in Macduff for her amusing tale.

You can always rely on children to put things into perspective!

Your letters were terrific and it was very difficult choosing winners. One of the best things about them was the humour. They really brightened up my day.

Don't despair! If you weren't lucky this time, however, because next week I'll be announcing details of another super competition with a very unusual prize. Pens at the ready for the off again shortly.

Until then, keep those letters coming. They're great. Maggie.



Prize-winner Mary Hogg gets her gift vouchers from Maggie.

Salute to old 'dogs'

Dear Maggie,
I remember vividly the first time I became aware of my feet. I was about ten years old and I trot on a nail in a broken-down shoe where I had no right to be in the first place. The experience left its mark on me!

Moving on a couple of years I trampled on broken glass in a fast-flowing burn, was sure I would bleed to death, but didn't think my grand parents, whose responsibility I was more saddened than relieved by my survival.

Getting older but no wiser! I was completely shattered when I discovered my feet had changed their shape adversely and permanently! It is a mathematical fact that a size 4 foot into a size 4 shoe won't go. My effort to possess tiny trotters was "defeated". Even so over the years they have done all I have asked of them.

In happier times they have danced the nights away under foreign skies, travelled extensively abroad, and climbed many a hill. Now on the wrong side of 70 they still wear several miles daily, bear me along together with shopping bags and take me through the exercises at my weekly Keep Fit class.

Dear faithful "dogs" I salute you! You deserve retirement too, but you'll just have to continue to put up with me.
Mrs Isabel Grant,
90 Middlefield Terrace,
Aberdeen.

Lacing boots

Dear Maggie,
When I was at school I had to wear lacing boots, and wasn't I mad? My Mum had put on her new single shoes I envied her. Mine were always a longer-legged version of boots — and of course, NO ONE ELSE had to wear them.

However, as an OAP, I never need to visit the chiropodist, have no bunions, corns or any other sore point and I now appreciate the protection my mother took all those years ago.

Mrs Una Haines,
2 Broomfield Crescent,
Edinburgh.

Trauchled wi' boats

Dear Maggie,
Gone are ma trauchles
Fain I wore a pair o' bawdies.
An' I had an awfu' job
Tae keep them oan.
For they were ma sister's
shen
And they were just worn
dren.
Frae wa'kin' frae the Dee
Tae the Dun
I can min' I winked my
ey.
At a laddie passin' by
For I tho' that I wud try
Tae open doors
But he looked down at ma
feet.
An' w' a vice sae bitter
sawet,
Said "Yer boots are nae
complete
without the oars."
Mrs Jean Milne
9 Mathers Road,
Kincorth.



And now, a corny joke

Q: What did one big toe say to the other big toe?
A: Don't move! There's a couple of heels behind you!

And Mrs W. Bremner, of Aberdeen, sent me in the following and I've just enough room this week to fit

Sair feet saga

Dear Maggie,
Once, when on holiday, we visited Edzell Castle. It was a very hot day and my six-year-old daughter was grumbling about the cobblestones, so had to walk on. Trying to cheer her up, I said: "Just imagine, Mary Queen of Scots once walked here."
Back came the answer: "Well she must have had awfu' sair feet!"

Muckle slippy stanes

JUST a couple of autographs this week but lovely ones at that. The first is from Mrs Ena Jones, 10 Ritchie Place, Aberdeen, who says we should always bear this in mind whenever we have an unkind word to say about someone.

Gin yer neebor chance tae fe,
Dinna let her lie.
Lend tae her a helping hand,
Dinna pass her by.
For maybe ye may chance tae fa'.
Like many an anc afore,
For there's aye a muckle slippy stane
At likka body's door.

And Mrs W. Bremner, of Aberdeen, sent me in the following and I've just enough room this week to fit

Dear Maggie,
All my life I have been an admirer of pretty footwear. Perhaps it is because I myself was fortunate in always having healthy feet and legs and a wise mother to guide me when young in the art of choosing the right shoes.

She always took me with her when she went shoe-shopping and I couldn't wait to sneak into her bedroom, get into these lovely new shoes and gawdle in front of and the long cheval mirror for hours on end, pretending I had the beautiful feet, ankles and legs of a Margot Fonteyn.

What memories these shoes in my life conjure up for me!
The royal blue suede ones with the two tiny gold buckles at each side, the jade ones to match my first off-the-shoulder dress and the vivid scarlet curls. When one of the heels got detached during a waltz my partner

pocketed it as a souvenir and sent the shoe back to me all fixed up and repaired, accompanied by a box of "Black Magic" chocolates and a bunch of velvety red roses.
Oh, and I can't forget that pair of pastel blue suede, or the white satins darning in and out like two white mice from beneath my dress, that I was wearing when the guy proposed who later became my husband.
I thought I had reached the very height of fashion when he sent me later on from Canada, a pair of white kids, gold-tasselled thigh boots, which I adored and still treasure.
And so with straps here, ornaments and buckles there, I tripped my shoe loving ways along the decades, quite oblivious of how the years were passing, until I realised I had reached the stage where dancing shoes with jewelled heels changed

places for black satin cosy, fur-lined house slippers, and I was growing old alone and a widow I hold on to these beautiful shoe memories with their stories and varied experiences for me.

On one of these occasions of reminiscence, I went to the shoe cupboard for my cosy black satin house slippers, but couldn't get my feet into them. Our pet cat, "Fluffy" had carried her kittens one jet black, the other a lovely tortoiseshell and concealed them, one in each slipper in the shoe cupboard, for warmth and safety, and she, fast asleep alongside.

I had not the heart to disturb such a scene of perfect harmony and came away content to wear an old pair. This was surely the sweetest of all my shoe-experiences over a long life.

Mrs Mary Hogg,
Balmagask House,
Aberdeen.



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SCOTTISH GAS

pop talk/ by Brian Aitken

AN ABERDEEN promoter has begun a search to bring the top names in rock to the city.

But it's not the bands he is looking for — it's a venue. Duncan Hendry, of the Moonance Agency is confident that most touring bands would come to Aberdeen.

But the problem he feels is getting the right place at the right time — the weekend.

He said: "The people who own and control the venues use them at the weekend for different, more middle-of-the-road entertainment. So any attempts that have been made in the past to bring the bigger groups to Aberdeen regularly have been done on nights during the week."

"I could get hold of a big place, then bands which are coming through at a national level would be viable."

You only need to look at the kind of groups who travel to Edinburgh and Glasgow, week in, week out, to see the exciting prospect a regular live music venue would be at the weekend.

But Duncan realises finding a big enough venue is going to be difficult, so he is also aiming his sights a little lower. He said: "There's a lot of people wanting to go to see a band at the weekend but what sort of band I put on depends on the venue. Obviously the bigger the venue, the bigger the band."

"There's a multitude of good Scottish bands on the go just now, quite a lot of good new young local bands coming through and there is always a lot of touring bands as well."

"They maybe aren't big enough to fill Fusion, but put them on at the weekend at the right venue they could go down pretty well."

Asia Minors . . . The Boomtown Rats return to Britain after two years away with a lot to prove. They have been treated like super stars in Japan, Australia, Asia and the Middle East, where they have been

Meeting place for the stars

playing for the past few months, but find their last two British singles have been flops.

So the Rats start a crucial 26-date tour next month which will showcase their new album "The Deep," released next week, and their new single "House on Fire," which isn't exactly blazing up the charts at the moment.

Three shows are included — at the Glasgow Apollo on April 18, the Capitol in Aberdeen on April 19, and Edinburgh Playhouse on the following night. Tickets priced £3.50 and £4.50 on sale at the Capitol at the end of the week.

Rats fans who were at the band's sell-out show at the Capitol a couple of years ago will notice one line-up change: guitarist Gerry Cott, who left last year, will not be replaced and the Rats are to tour as a five-piece.

No Bell . . . Pop rhythm princes, the Bluebells, have had to pull out of tonight's show at Vauxhall Rock Club.

The Glasgow band who put in a splendid performance in supporting Haircut 100 at Fusion three weeks ago, are rumoured to be coming back to the city however . . . to support the Beat at their forthcoming concert.

Top Glasgow band the Recognitions who are set to sign a recording deal with a major record company, have stepped in at the last minute to top tonight's bill.

HEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS . . . "Picture This" (Chrysalis). Obviously American but surprisingly rock. They're probably considered new wave in their home country. There are plenty of British bands starting the brand of rock — the News just play it better than most. Look out for the single "Do You Believe in Love," it's climbing the US charts and it could well be the same here.

BARBARA THOMPSON AND BOB ARGENT . . . "Chapman" (MCA). Not denying the evidence

on these two of the troop of minstrels that accompany them on every instrument imaginable. But it's still one of the few albums that had the same old wall with boredom before the first number was finished.

CENTRAL LINE . . . "Breaking Point" (Mercury). Loved their single "Walking into Sunshine" and I like this a lot. Featuring young Londoners showing the American how to play first class funk.