

— THE FORESTRY HOAX —

EASTER 1931.

1

A Critic.

Not all of the inhabitants in the North-East approve of the modern student. I have received the following letter from one of the disgruntled members of the community who signs himself "Oldtimer"—

Sir,—For the past fortnight I have been painfully aware that the Aberdeen University has been closed for the Easter holidays, and would like you to help me in an effort to open the eyes of present-day students to the folly of the nauseating degenerate way in which these holidays are spent.

Nowadays students come home to our parish and, attired in gaudy plus-fours, talk airily of 'Varsity life. They smoke endless cigarettes and, beyond billiards, take no real exercise. As for work, they never consider it.

Has the Carnegie Trust made things too easy for them? I think it has, and there isn't the same diligence in pursuit of knowledge as prevailed when long holidays were necessary to enable students to earn their college fees. In those days, sheep-herding, beating, tree-felling and farm work were recognised vacation jobs.

Students once besieged Aberdeen timber merchants to be allowed to assist in floating timber down from Deeside estates. The

Herculean job has disappeared with the evolution of modern transport, but was once a common attraction for townfolk, and provided thrills, rivalling the feats of Canadian lumber-men. Few men to-day could take timber down the river, and certainly not your 'Varsity student.

There is, however, any number of jobs that students could undertake with profit to themselves, and benefit to the community. Let them get to work, or let the University authorities shorten the holidays, the primary object of which has been lost sight of by a spoon-fed generation.

Letter in Evening Express of Monday 13th April

CORRESPONDENCE.

Rafting on the Dee.

I was very much interested in the reference made by "Oldtimer" to rafting on the Dee, as I have heard old people talk about it on various occasions. Perhaps he could give us, through the medium of this Corner, some more information about this bygone practice.

IGNORANCE.

Students Can Work.

Allow me to point out to "Oldtimer" that his letter decrying the present-day students is very much out-of-place in view of their coming campaign on behalf of Aberdeen Hospitals. They devote more time and energy to the benefit of the community than their predecessors ever did, thanks to the Carnegie Trust, which relieves them from the struggle to earn fees.

Also, "Oldtimer" is ill-informed with regard to the present-day student and work. I have had considerable experience of students both in the woods and sawmills, and find them as willing, as strong, and as skilful to-day as forty years ago.

WOODMERCHANT.

Replies: - Tuesday 14th April

Test for Students. *Wed 15th*

Further correspondence has arrived regarding the ability and willingness of students to work during vacation:—

Sir, "Woodmerchant's" letter is very encouraging, and his reference to the hospitals campaign is certainly apt. Still I don't agree with him that students to-day are as strong and skilful in practical work as were their predecessors. I propose to test this, and at the same time offer them a chance of helping the hospitals.

I will deposit a cheque for £50 with Lord Provost Rust to be handed over to the Students' Hospital Fund, if the following conditions are complied with:—

(a) The students must build a raft (fell the material for, etc.), which shall be not less than 10 feet square.

(b) The raft must be floated down the river by two students only.

(c) The students must publicly announce the date of the attempt and the time of arrival in Aberdeen.

(d) It must travel down-stream for at least 15 miles.—Yours, etc.,

OLDTIMER.

□ □ □ □

THE CHALLENGE ISSUED
Wednesday 15th

Building of Raft. *Thurs 16th*

There has been a prompt acceptance of the challenge issued by "Oldtimer" yesterday, in respect of the building of a raft by University students, and as will be seen from the following letter, it is practically certain that he will have to say good-bye to the £50 cheque which he is depositing with Lord Provost Rust:—

Sir,—“Oldtimer” seems to have rather a distorted view of the present-day student and, as an opportunity to restore his perspective to normal, we welcome his challenge, which we hereby accept on behalf of the Aberdeen University Forestry Students.

We agree to all his conditions, and two of our members will bring the raft from Durrus Bridge to Aberdeen, arriving at the Esplanade above Victoria Bridge on Thursday, 23rd April, at approximately 3 p.m.

Messrs A. and G. Paterson, who are at present felling on Durrus estate, have kindly placed the necessary trees at our disposal.

We hope that “Oldtimer” will use his influence, so that Lord Provost Rust will be present on their arrival, complete with cheque.

(Signed) John M. Ross, President,
A.U. Forestry Society.
W. Duncan Haldane,
Secretary, A.U. Forestry
Society.

THE CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.
Thursday 16th

The building
Monday the 20th
night and was



WILL IT SINK?—One of the Aberdeen University Forestry students tests the raft which they are building at Durris Bridge, to navigate the Dee for a challenge of £50.

Mr. J. M. Stephen, Maud: secretary



Evening Express: - Tuesday 21st April.



Getting ready for the great float. Students of Aberdeen University, who propose to navigate the Dee in a raft, building their novel craft. (P & J) *Wednesday: - 22nd April.*

JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1931.

al Drama Finalists -:- Inverness



GETTING READY for the great float.—Students of Aberdeen University, who propose to navigate the Dee in a raft, building their novel craft. ("P. & J." Copyright.)

Wednesday 22nd April.



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARITY



Two Aberdeen forestry students—Messrs J. H. Ritchie and F. G. Harper—who have accepted a challenge to navigate the Dee from Durrus to Aberdeen, a distance of 15 miles. If completed to-day a cheque for £50 will be paid by the challenger to the Students' Gala Week funds.—“Bulletin” Photograph.

THRILLS ON DEE.

Students Out To
Win £50.

DOWN RIVER BY LOG-RAFT.

Two Aberdeen University students
have had a thrilling time navigating a
log-raft down the Dee.

If the public of Aberdeen have been wondering why, so far, they have not been compelled to respond to the "Can Your Cash" slogan of the University students, who are prosecuting their gala week campaign for local hospitals, they will find that from to-day until the end of the week the "extraction" process will be in full swing.

Have a look at the corner allocated to the students' publicity department, and you, Mr and Mrs Everybody, will see what "ferlies" you may witness this day—chiefly at the Links in the afternoon, when a famous Eastern potentate will arrive by aeroplane, and after an imposing reception will tour the town, perhaps in an old horse cab.

Late last night the "Press and Journal" got authentic news concerning one of the most daring and novel "stunts" that are being carried through in connection with the efforts of the students to raise at least £5000.

Challenge Accepted.

Forestry students, accepting the challenge of an anonymous "Old-Timer" to construct a log-raft and float it from near Durris Bridge to near the mouth of the Dee, look like claiming on Thursday afternoon the cheque for £50 which Lord Provost Rust holds if they succeed.

Yesterday two stalwarts—F. G. Harper and James Ritchie—who, incidentally, are among the University's best boxers and swimmers—set off on a raft, thirty feet long and five feet broad, and after many adventures anchored their five logs about half-a-mile above Culter.

We had a thrilling time, said Mr Harper, in an interview. In the rapids above Park House the raft suddenly turned over, and Ritchie had to swim for it.

I managed to scramble on to the end of the raft, and, with the aid of our "stings" or poles, we got it righted. Then at the acute bend of the river just before reaching Drum we grounded in the shallows.

The raft had to be broken up and floated, log by log, for about 100 yards to a sand-bank in still water. This involved wading over a rocky bed up to the waist in swirling water.

The raft had to be roped together again. This meant considerable loss of time, but we got going and were able to navigate it to a point on the south bank which offered safe anchorage over night some distance west of Culter.

Shooting Downstream.

While we hope that the worst of our ordeal is past, we realise that further difficulties may beset us when we set about shooting downstream as far as Stewart's Island, about a mile above the Bridge of Dee. We hope to make that point about 2 p.m. to-day.

On the way to the appointed objective, North Esplanade West, near Victoria Bridge, we shall have to cover deep water, but we are confident that we shall win the bet and "can" £50 for the funds on Thursday afternoon.

It is interesting to note that Mr Harper's grandfather, once a wood merchant near Aboyne, was in his time one of the most famous wood-rafters on Dee-side.

Forestry Society of "Oldtimer's" challenge has caught the imagination of our townfolk.

The fact that the students are held to a certain date will add to their difficulties, for unless the river happens to be in spate next Thursday they will almost certainly be held by shallows and big rocks.

□ □ □ □

The Raft's Arrival.

The students have a hazardous task ahead of them, and if they are successful they will have truly earned the wager.

The raft will arrive in Aberdeen at the North Esplanade West to-morrow at 3.30 p.m., when the Lord Provost will hand over the cheque for £50.

← PRESS AND JOURNAL
WEDNESDAY

↑ EVENING
EXPRESS
WEDNESDAY

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£50. James H. Rust

Evening Express

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We had a thrilling time, said Mr Harper, in an interview. In the rapids above Park House the raft suddenly turned over, and Ritchie had to swim for it.

Alfonso stood at the entrance for some minutes and raised his hat and bowed in acknowledgment of the enthusiastic greetings. The cordon of police was broken by a large number of people in their eagerness to welcome him.

A welcome surprise awaited King Alfonso as he entered the swing doors of the hotel. Ex-King Manoel of Portugal was in the foyer to greet him. They talked for a little while, and then King Alfonso went to his suite of rooms.

and for

"Oldtimer" has lodged his stake of £50. He has paid it over to Lord Provost Rust who has, like a good Aberdonian, placed it in his own banking account, but the Lord Provost has handed over a cheque, a photograph of which we reproduce, to Mr C. I. Simpson, treasurer of the Students' Hospital Fund.

Floating Down the River.

The acceptance by the University Forestry Society of "Oldtimer's" challenge has caught the imagination of our townsfolk.

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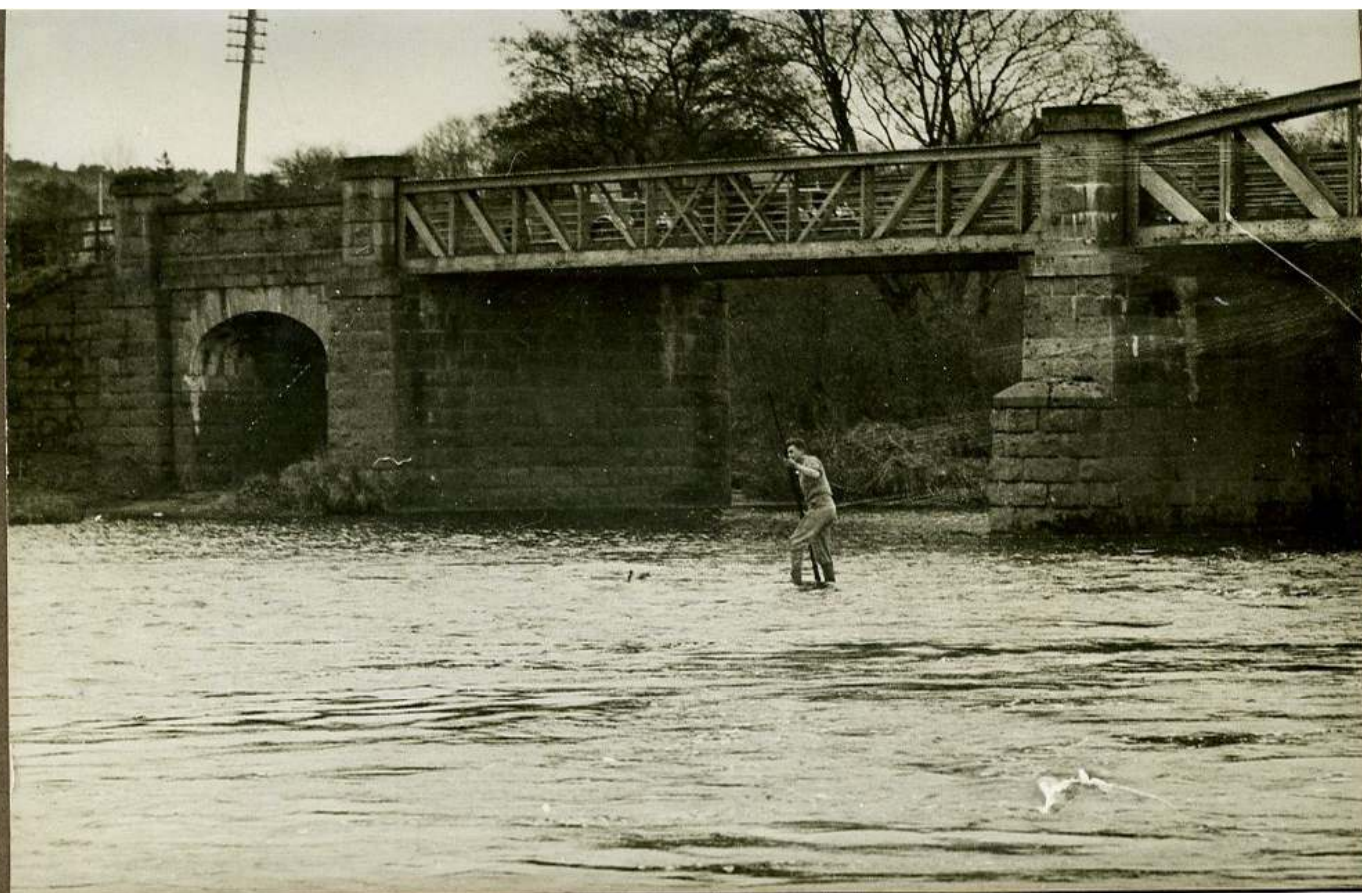
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← PRESS AND JOURNAL
WEDNESDAY

↑ EVENING
EXPRESS
WEDNESDAY



Evening Express
Tuesday, 21st.



ment by thousands of people.

Many have been intrigued by the daring action of two forestry students in accepting a challenge—to win £50 for the funds—to construct a lug-raft and float it down the Dee from Durrus Bridge to a point near Victoria Bridge.

Yesterday the raft was taken to a mooring point about a mile beyond the Bridge of Dee, from a part of the river west of Culter, where it lay overnight after completing the first part of the hazardous journey.

The raft proved so water-logged that it could carry only one man yesterday, and even with this "half-crew" it was partly submerged.

This afternoon the raft will be taken to the North Esplanade West, where at three p.m. Lord Provost Rust will hand over the cheque from "Oldtimer," who issued the challenge.

Dancing Competitions.

EVENING EXPRESS
WEDNESDAY



N "RIPPER" SENT



STUDENT "LUMBERMAN'S" HAZARDOUS VOYAGE.—Mr. F. G. Harper, a forestry student at Aberdeen University, on the partly-submerged log raft which he is piloting down the River Dee for a wager of £50 for the Aberdeen University Charity Week funds.

THE
DAILY
EXPRESS
Thursday 23rd April

Mr Francis Harper, an Aberdeen University forestry student, completed the last stage of his journey from Durrus to Aberdeen by raft yesterday afternoon, and so won the challenge money of £50 put up by "Oldtimer" for any student who could accomplish the feat. Mr Harper also disproved "Oldtimer's" contention that the youth of to-day had not the hardihood and courage of past generations.

A large crowd gave Mr Harper a rousing reception when he arrived at North Esplanade West about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and Lord Provost Rust was the first to congratulate him.

Mr V. Eddie, president of the S.R.C., introduced him to the Lord Provost; Mr G. S. Fraser, Town Clerk; and Mr G. A. Wilson, who awaited the rafter's arrival at the landing stage.

for the gala week charity funds.

An anonymous man wagered fifty pounds that there was not a student in the university with the spirit to embark on the journey from Durrus to the esplanade at Aberdeen, a distance of about thirty miles. Yesterday two students piloted the raft, which they made themselves, from Durrus to about a mile above Culter.

WATCHER'S POST.

It was found that the river was more easily navigable by one man, even if the task was harder and more dangerous. Mr. James Ritchie, Mr. Harper's partner in the first stage of the journey, therefore withdrew to-day to a watcher's post on the bank.

The raft was partially submerged.

Mr. Harper wore only a football shirt and flannel trousers tucked into ordinary shoes, and to-day, with great skill, and with no more than three persons watching him, he steered his raft ten miles with a fir pole from the starting point to Stewart's Island, a little below the Shakin Briggie.

Stewart's Island was safely reached, and Mr. Harper told me he has little fear of negotiating the final reach to the city to-morrow.

When he reaches the esplanade the cheque will be publicly handed over by Lord Provost Rust, in whose custody it is.

"FOREIGN POTENTATE."

While this raft was nosing its way down the river another and fleetier craft, a light airplane, was travelling to Aberdeen at eighty miles an hour, bearing the mysterious "foreign potentate," Mustapha Khannphull.

Late in the afternoon it was learned that Mustapha Khannphull had mistaken the Bass Rock for a bottle, had made a forced landing, and was injured. He was able, however, to complete the journey to Aberdeen by road, and was greeted on the links by a large crowd, who gave the more readily because he was a bandaged and damaged potentate.

These, two of the brightest "stunts" the students have devised for their charity campaigns for many years, were a splendid preliminary to the great onslaught on Friday, when the town will be besieged by students in carnival costumes.

LOG RAFT DRAMA OF DEE.

OVERTURNS AT PARK.

STUDENTS SWIM FOR LIFE.

One of the most daring adventures ever associated with the charities campaign of the Aberdeen University students on behalf of the hospitals is the floating of a raft this year down the Dee to win £50.

It is the Forestry students of the University who have accepted the challenge of an anonymous "Old-timer" to construct a log raft and float it from near Durrus Bridge to near the mouth of the Dee.

Yesterday in the rapids at Park the raft suddenly turned over, and one of the students, Mr James Ritchie, had to swim for his life.

To-day the other student in the raft drama on the Dee, Mr F. G. Harper, is continuing the journey alone, the raft being found to be more easily navigated with one of a crew.

This forenoon he started at a point outside Culter, and was seen to shoot the rapids under the Milltimber Bridge with the éclat of a Canadian lumberman.