

Why did our Sandy become a baker?

When Sandy was about 14 Dad tried to extol the benefits of joining the Army Ordnance Corps. It was the Army's Technical Corps and all ranks were more highly paid than the P.B.I. Ma joined in too – more money, better job etc, and this went on for quite a while, but Sandy wouldn't agree. As soon as he was 14 he apprenticed himself to a baker in Maud. Ma and Dad were both disappointed. After Sandy had been baking for just more than a year his foreman got a better job with Mitchell & Muill in Aberdeen and took Sandy with him. After a short time Sandy became Mitchell & Muill's pancake and scone baker. After another interval his foreman's pal came up from London and took Sandy back with him to become scone and pancake baker at Claridges Hotel. He was in that job when the 1914 war broke out. He joined up at once and instead of baking was put on Motor Transport of which he knew nothing. That's how the Army worked.

Why did I only stay one day at Methlick H G School?

At the age of 14 I went to Methlick HG School. I spent the first day and did nothing. I went home and said I wasn't going back. Strangely enough the Tarves headmaster backed me. Ma and Dad reluctantly agreed (perhaps because of their experience with Sandy). I took the first job that came along. Butler (boot cleaner) at the Haddo Shooting Lodge. That was only a six week seasonal job and just as I finished that Mrs Sleigh in the Post Office wanted a telegraph messenger so I got that job. I enjoyed that and soon mastered the sending and receiving of telegrams. It was a machine with a face like a clock, alphabet round it and buttons to press and a handle to turn when sending. It was a long day, 8am to 8pm but I enjoyed it. Then the war came along and the lines were hot. Then the Reservists call up papers came in and I had to deliver every one of them. I think Mrs Sleigh could have employed someone else to help me but I imagine she had experience of the Boer War and possible a bit of sympathy for the reservists and their wives, families and she decreed I deliver them all. The parish was very big and the distance for each delivery from 2 to 4 miles. It took me 2 days working up to 10 at night to deliver them all. The thing I remember most was the sadness in every house I went to and the best thing was the plate of rasps and cream from the Postmistress each night when I finished..

At the same time this was going on the Territorials were mobilised and that meant Dad and Jimmy were going and the day came very quickly when they marched away. Dad was RSM of the 5th Gordons and he had enlisted almost every young lad in the village so that after they went we were shocked to find how few were the young lads left in the village and parish. Dad and Jimmy and the 5th Gordons after a short time settled in Bedford. Dad was commissioned Lieut and Quartermaster in the 2nd /5th Gordons of which Jimmy was now a Sergt(aged 17) went to France in May 1915 as part of the 51st Division. Dad then came up and persuaded me (without too much difficulty) to go to Aberdeen to attend a Civil Service College while Oddy went back with Dad to Bedford to stay with them.