

On the Couch



(Q) You have been a club member for 11 years, how did you come to join?

(A) I'd recently been on a walking holiday in the Highlands and wanted to do more. A club member whom I met at a working lunch recommended HF for its friendliness and good mountain practice. On my first outing, to Beinn a'Ghlo, I wasn't disappointed. I haven't always walked regularly in the last ten years, but I keep coming back.

(Q) Your roots are in Gaeldom, do you have any desire to go back to some Scottish island to retire?

(A) Not so much a desire as an ambivalence. I didn't grow up in North Uist, though I have a great affinity for it. I'm not sure about the isolation living there involves. The island has its own beauty but I would miss trees and big hills.....and friends, I guess I'll just play it by ear.

(Q) Is there then some special place in the world you would most like to visit?

(A) I'm curious to visit as many places as possible and get a lot out of different cultures, but I've long since given up believing that any one spot is the ultimate destination.

(Q) What do you most like to put on your sandwiches?.....careful how you respond to this, you could give a lot away!

(A) Ah well, you'll have to mark me down as fickle, because I like variety. The thought of eating the same combination every trip fills me with dread. Quite often I don't make up sandwiches and have fruit and nuts instead. The only guarantee I will give is that there will be plenty of it. (Note readers, there is no mention of chocolate, just the old, shifty "fruit and nuts" response.....highly suspect answer, (editor).

(Q) If you could change one single thing in this world, what would it be?

(A) I've given this some thought. I am always distressed by suffering, but it seems to be part of living. If I could wave a wand and stop people deliberately hurting each other and animals, I would be well pleased. Failing that I'd like to find a way of keeping my clothes in order, which doesn't involve coat hangers.....aha!., coat hangers, very revealing (editor).

(Q) You have a fascinating job in television and films as a producer, but is there some other direction you would like to have taken in life?

(A) Oh dear, the "death bed wish" question. Well, I've never really been fit as fellow walkers can testify, but one day.....

(Q) Who would you like to see most fry in Hell?.....club members excepted!

(A) The person who bought the flat above me, (along with some very large hammers and drills), would benefit from some time "down below" me.

(Q) Do you have a favourite composer, author, film director?

(A) Absolutely not, it depends on my mood. Madrigals and the more obscure jazz pieces wouldn't make it to my desert island, neither would Salman Rushdie or James Kelman. Everyone else would have my full attention, ("Black Beauty" can still bring a tear to my eye mind you).

(Q) Did you have a childhood hero/heroine?

(A) Yes, Calamity Jane.

(Q) What's your favourite tippie?

(A) Mostly now, it's "Redbush" tea, but if your buying Tom, I'll have a gin & tonic with ice & lemon!

(Q) Are you a dog or a cat person?

(A) Oh, I like my companions to be unreservedly loving, non-judgemental, faithful, joyful and good eaters, so I'm a dog person.

(Q) What's the best advice you have ever received from anyone?

(A) I have two cherished pearls. Early in life I was told that, if a thing is worth doing it's worth doing well. Later on, someone else said there were no right or wrong decisions, just decisions which either worked or didn't. This second piece of advice helps me make up my mind what to do, and the first one keeps me trying!

(Q) Describe Elaine MacLean in four words.

(A) Try ENFJ

Right on the ball, I couldn't have put that better myself.

Thanks Elaine for a very entertaining interview, you're up for a flagon of gin & tonic anytime! (editor)



CAPTION COMPETITION

A penny for Maisie's thoughts, a pound for John's....and a fiver for Jean's! (photo taken at club Christmas party 2005)