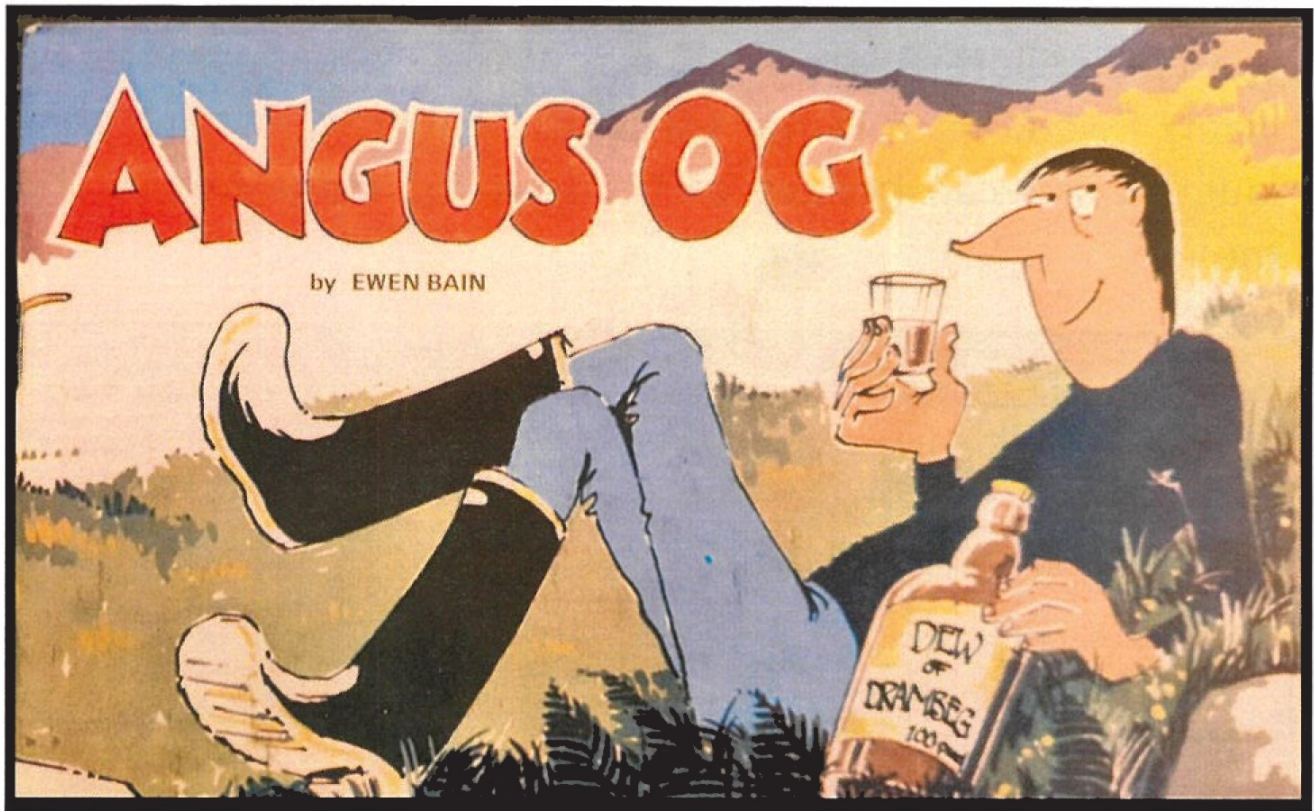


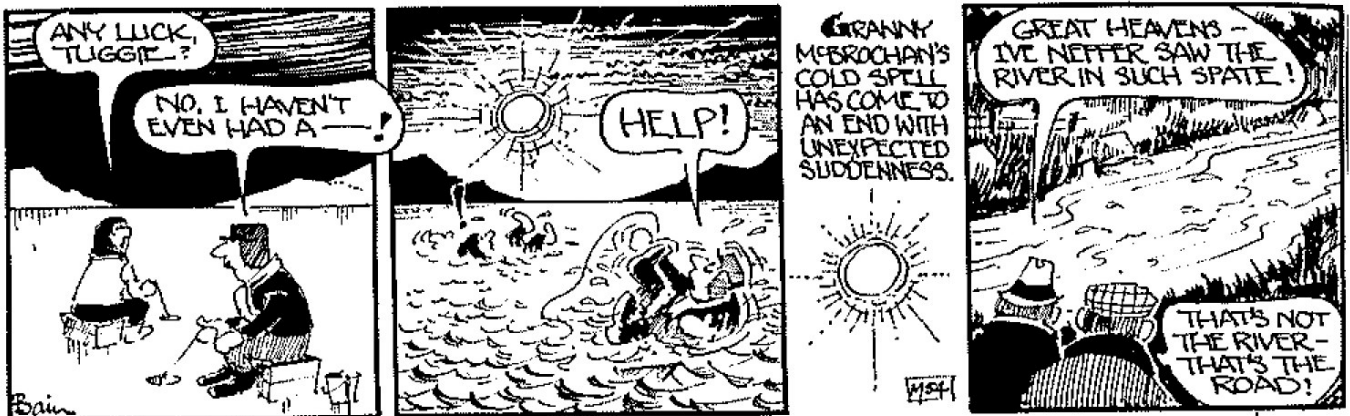
Ewen Bain – A Biography “From the Og Logs, Angus Og”

Compiled by Sheila Bain, September 1990



“It was midsummer when Ewen Campbell Bain was born in Maryhill, Glasgow, on 23 June 1925, the youngest of three children born to John and Flora Bain from the isle of Skye. His father from Waternish and his mother from Staffin had moved to Glasgow after their marriage in 1912. Surrounded by the tenements and streets of Maryhill they never forgot the lovely island they had left, and their city home became a place of highland hospitality where Ewen’s first words would undoubtedly have been in Gaelic.

Ewen had very happy memories of his childhood in Glasgow where a favourite treat was a walk with his father to see the ships lined along the busy docks on Clydeside - sadly empty today! Margaret, his sister, does not remember Ewen drawing much at home though he was good at art in school. She does remember him clowning and carrying-on with herself and his brother James. When this got out of hand, the two children would get a row from their parents, but rarely Ewen. He told me escaped trouble by making them laugh: this I can believe as he used the same tactics with me!



Ewen had even happier memories of idyllic summer holidays. Each year at the beginning of July there was great excitement when the hamper was brought out for packing - the signal for the early morning departure on the train to Mallaig where Macbrayne's steamer was waiting to speed them over the sea to Skye. Ewen's mother stayed with the children during July and August and there was more excitement when their father arrived in Staffin for his annual holiday. This was much more than a family holiday - it was 'coming home' and the welcome, of course, would be in Gaelic. Ewen loved Skye and was very keen that I should share its magic with him.

My choice of view to express that magic would be of rounding the bend of the road at the monument in Staffin to behold the superb Quirang against a lilac, evening sky with Brogagig and Stenscholl spread below it. Following that would be the welcome awaiting us at Riverside.

The carefree summers of Ewen's boyhood ended with the advent of the second world war. His brother was already in the merchant navy when Ewen left woodside secondary to enrol in the Glasgow School of Art. Before he was called up to join the royal navy he had to take his share of the fire watching rota in the mackintosh building 'a skylark' he called it, never being one to take life too seriously.

Ewen trained as a coder and spent most of the war sailing between Gibraltar and west Africa on convoy- escort duty. He had funny stories about his wartime experiences. It would happen to Ewen, of course, that his office was in the bowels of the ship next to the ammunition store. When he was demobbed, he returned to Glasgow School of Art where he was one of many ex-servicemen and women who had priority of entry. It was there that we met as students, and we married in Glasgow in 1950. I remember only one cartoon at that time which was published in Ygorra, the students' charities magazine.



Ewen trained as a teacher in Jordanhill college of education and taught in a number of schools in Glasgow until he left in 1969 for a full-time career as a cartoonist. he started drawing single cartoons to supplement our income when I resigned from teaching after our daughter, Rhona was born in 1955. to guard against disappointment from early rejections he always made sure that several batches of cartoons were in the post. it was a great thrill when some were accepted and the welcome cheques arrived. his talent spotted, he was advised to attempt a strip cartoon and from this encouragement Angus Og was created, his first adventure appearing in the Glasgow bulletin in 1960. shortly after that the bulletin ceased publication and 'Angus Og' joined the daily record and later the Sunday mail. it was midwinter when Ewen died suddenly and unexpectedly on 18 December 1989, from pneumonia. this was a dark day for me and, though I greatly miss his cheerful, kindly presence, the brightness of his humour lives on in Angus Og."

