

## Bernard Connelly 1902 - 1988

In 2021 the Roman Catholic church of St John the Evangelist sits proudly on Brighton Place in Portobello, just four miles from the centre of Edinburgh. The church is only two hundred yards from the home where James Connelly (1865 – 1927) and Mary Flora Kerr Still (1868 – 1941) lived with their four children at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1900 the type of dwelling at 4 Rosefield Avenue in Portobello, where the Connelly's had made a home and where their youngest child Mary was born that year, has still to be researched, but the immediate area was mostly tenements with drying greens at the rear and front doors that opened directly onto the street. The other siblings, also born in the small seaside town were; James, born 1893 in Ramsay Place, Helen, or Nellie as she was usually known born 1895 in Bridge Street along with her sister Jane born two years after her in 1897.

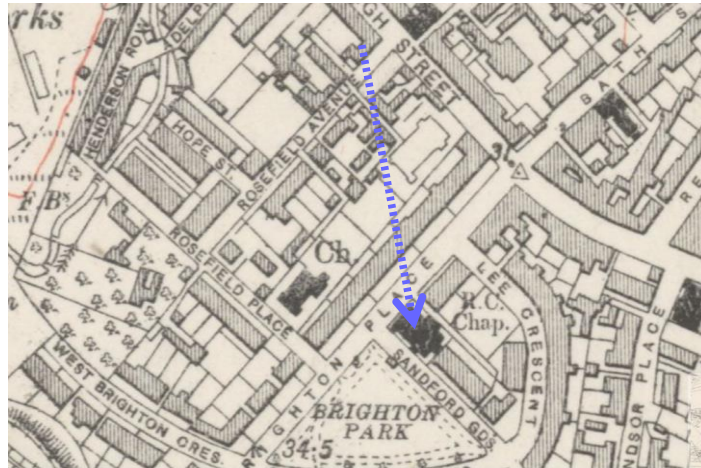
The Rosefield Avenue house backed onto the communal wash-house in Williamsfield Square but looked out along the busy High Street where horses and carts clattered over the cobbled road and trams whined as they entered and left the depot just fifty yards from the house. The general clamour of what was considered a relatively quiet town of 9000 souls was disconcerting to residents and visitors alike. Portobello had a beach, a pleasure pier, a railway station and new public baths under construction. After the discovery of beds of clay on the nearby Figgate Whins some 135 years previously, the manufacture of earthenware, bricks and tiles was still booming and had resulted in the establishment of chemical works and an iron foundry. Employment locally was excellent and the resulting pay-days for workers led to nightly visits to the tavern and inns as well as the eight spirit shops. The number of shops and volume of sales was crucial for James as he was employed as a spirit salesman.

The name Portobello is unusual as it has a fairly modern derivation. It comes from the name of a house, called Portobello Hut, which had been built in 1742 by a sailor called George Hamilton who had served under Admiral Edward Vernon in the capture of Porto Bello, Panama, in 1739, and he named the cottage Portobello Hut in honour of the victory. The area was part of the Figgate Whins where tradition says, that the area, formerly a forest, afforded shelter and a place of rendezvous to Sir William Wallace and his myr-midons, subordinates who were unscrupulous and carried out orders unquestioningly, when they were preparing to attack Berwick which was being held by the usurper Cromwell.

Statistical Account of Scotland 1845

By 1902 there were a number of places of worship for various denominations locally but the Connelly's, a second generation Irish-Catholic family, chose to practice their faith at St John's Roman Catholic chapel, part of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, which had been temporarily rehoused whilst a new and much larger church was constructed on the site. By the beginning of July of that year Mary Connelly was nearing the end of her fifth pregnancy and planned to have the child at home. After naming the existing children after; father, maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother and mother, the fifth child would be named after the paternal grandfather, as was custom, so Bernard it was to be.

Bernard was born at home (Appendix 1), as was usual at the beginning of the twentieth century, at 8pm on Monday 28 July 1902. The accuracy of the time is a peculiarity of Scottish birth certificates. Elsewhere on the document, father James occupation is noted as a carter, someone who transports goods by cart or wagon.



*St John's RC Chapel to 4 Rosefield Avenue – OS map IV.5, Courtesy National Library of Scotland*

Little is currently known of Bernard's early life although as a Catholic he would have attended St John's Roman Catholic School in Bath Street in Portobello, just a five minute walk from the house. The school opened on 13 December 1886 at 13 Bath Street, had less than 200 children and was closely associated with the church. A number of the teachers were nuns from the local convent.



*St John's Roman Catholic School at 13 Bath Street taken in 2021 – Private Collection*

His oldest siblings attended their secondary education at the same building but also used a local annex so the five children would see quite a lot of each other on any given day and may, in some classes, sit alongside one another in the double desk and seat sets. The three R's still took primacy in learning and as a 'first year', Bernard would have begun his education studying; reading, writing and arithmetic from basic much used reading books and from the teacher using the wide blackboard and white chalk to outline words and calculations for copying or 'working out'. The children's answers were carefully written down on slates using slate pencils made of soapstone or softer pieces of slate rock, sometimes wrapped in paper to keep tiny hands a smidgin cleaner.

Construction work on the St John's church site had been watched avidly by the family as the structure rose from the space where they had only recently prayed. The architect, J T Walford, completed the new and towering church in 1906 to the delight of local Catholics. The finished building, although squashed into a small space, was spectacular with a bell tower stretching to almost 200 feet. Walford was famous for building other places of worship including the Church of St. Alban's, in Leeds, by 1876 and the London Oratory by 1884. He moved to Scotland in the late 1800's but it has yet to be determined whether he moved to build the new church or received the job after settling in nearby Joppa.

Outside the cosy world the family lived in the Trade Disputes Act was enshrined into Law allowing legitimate Trade Unions to strike. Unions would have an impact on Bernards later life but for now was just something his father James had heard about along with the introduction of the state pension, which might have given the carter up to five shillings a week had he lived to the age of seventy.

By 1910 and Bernard's eighth birthday he had seen pictures and managed to read some of the story in his father's newspaper about the death of King Edward VII and the succession by George V but had also witnessed death at first hand when his older sister passed away aged twelve. When Jane died Bernard, and the rest of the family, were still mourning Sydney, who had died the previous year aged just two and Henry, the twin of Elizabeth, who had died a few years previously at only eight months old. Those days were hard.

Rosefield Avenue was not a large house and space was tight. The children were crowded into beds made up just before bedtime and removed when they arose. James applied to Edinburgh Corporation for a larger house and in 1911 the family (Appendix 2) moved across the other side of Portobello High Street to a flat in a sandstone tenement at 6 Ramsay Place, a distance of 175 yards and closer to the children's school.



*Courtesy - Getty images*

When the Great War, renamed World War One, began Bernard had just started secondary school but oldest brother James was twenty-one and old enough to serve in the military.

Father James was employed by Edinburgh Corporation as a carter but at forty-nine was too old to serve so the family, like millions of others, watched from the sidelines, talked about it at mealtimes and read anything and everything that appeared in the daily newspapers about the catastrophic events taking place in the world.

Their lives may not have changed dramatically on a day-to-day basis but as the years unfolded, they followed closely news of; the British expeditionary force at Mons, trench warfare at Ypres, allied troops landings at Gallipoli and the sinking of the Lusitania by a German submarine with the consequential loss of 1200 lives.

By the time conscription was introduced in 1916, Bernards father James was also monitoring the events in his fathers homeland, Ireland. There was talk of a rebellion and sure enough at Easter, Irish revolutionaries launched the Easter Rising against British rule although it was to be three more years before they formed a breakaway Government and declared Irish independence. Only twenty-six counties formed the breakaway the state with the remaining six northern counties remaining as part

of the United Kingdom after partition in 1921.

When war ended in November 1918, Bernards had begun working although specific details are yet to be uncovered. At sixteen he was tall, about 5 feet 8 inches, and thin, a trait that was to remain with him throughout his life. The family still lived in Ramsay Place and the flat was as crowded as it had ever been. Fortunately oldest brother James was moving out after meeting a new girlfriend, Annie Andrews, and landing a job as a railway clerk, so Nellie, now the eldest live-in sibling, who was a chocolate worker, may have been on the threshold of some privacy.

A year later even the national newspapers were full of a local story when the Airship R34 or 'Tiny', took off from the airfield at East Fortune just fifteen miles away down the east coast. The airship had been developed in secret inside an enormous hanger but its introduction into service for the war came too late for it to have been of use. The four-and-a-half-day journey saw it arriving in the USA with less than one hour's fuel left and carrying two stowaways. The first east – west air crossing. Bernard, now almost eighteen, was also enjoying some new found freedoms and took a full part in festivities when brother James was married to Annie in January 1920 in the magnificent St Mary's cathedral in Edinburgh city centre.

Whilst the 'roaring twenties' were taking place elsewhere and young men and women, who were more affluent than most, celebrated well into the night at fashionable clubs and dance halls, David Lloyd George the British Prime Minister who had foreseen a 'land fit for heroes' was overseeing unemployment of 2.5 million and widespread deprivation. Bernard had to contribute to the families upkeep and so an occasional drink out with friends was his more likely entertainment and its a wonder at all that he managed to meet, about that time, one Julia Murphy.



*Courtesy Hoopercity.com*

For the 'Bright Young Things' from the aristocracy and wealthier classes, life had never been better in the roaring twenties. Nightclubs, jazz clubs and cocktail bars flourished in the cities. The hedonistic lifestyle portrayed in books and films such as 'The Great Gatsby' was perhaps for some, an escape from reality. This generation had largely missed the war, being too young to fight, and perhaps there was a sense of guilt that they had escaped the horrors of war. Perhaps they felt a need to enjoy life to the full, because so many other young lives had been lost on the battlefields of Flanders

[Www.historic-uk](http://www.historic-uk)

Julia Murphy was one of five sisters and two brothers to Michael Murphy (1877 - 1955) and Annie McCann (c1880 – 1956) and was raised in the Parish of Cockpen, a few miles outside Edinburgh. A year older than Bernard she was also the Murphy's eldest child and worked as a live-in domestic servant or ladies companion at Fisherrow on the outskirts of Musselburgh and only two miles from Bernards home. How they met has been lost in time but by 1925 the bond of love was strong enough for them to marry (Appendix 3), which they did, in St John's church on 14 September 1925.





*Bernard & Julia Connelly flanked by younger brother Alec and his soon to be wife Josephine O'Neill – Private Collection*

Friends and family gathered from far and wide to celebrate the joyous occasion within the church where the arched wooden roof supported by carved stone pillars framed the beautiful stained-glass windows allowing the late summer sun to stream through onto Julia's shimmering white dress. The congregation listened enraptured to the nuptial mass conducted in Latin. The words 'I do' in English lifted the spirits of the onlookers and suggested the ceremonies end was in sight. After photographs, the newly-weds led friends and family onto a celebration that would last well into the night.

Given the levels of unemployment Bernard was lucky to have a job. He had fallen on his feet and was employed as a grocer's counter assistant, with reasonable prospects, within the Co-operative Society. Keen to get on, he worked long hours in the shop with his good level of education and determination, singling him out although he was also fond of practical jokes and would regularly upset bakers by nudging the bread delivery trays they carried on their head causing products to fall off and roll about.

Some of his free time was spent in the church where he assisted the priest at the altar, usually during early morning or Sunday tridentine mass. This mass, spoken in Latin, had been established by Pope Pius V 350 years before and was virtually unchanged but would be banned by the Pope in Bernard's lifetime, in favour of one spoken in the native languages.

Julia had become pregnant not long after the marriage and their first child James was born 24 July 1926 followed only 18 months later by Michael Joseph on 25 February 1928, alas in the following year, Bernards father James died of acute gastroenteritis and heart failure on 1 February 1929.

James Connelly was born 15 May 1865 at the Ironworks, Gladsmuir, near Haddington in East Lothian. The oldest son of Irish immigrants; Bernard Connolly (c.1840 – 1874) and Jane McDade (c. 1840 – 1895), he married Mary Flora Kerr Still from Aberdeen in 1891 before going on to have ten children with her. He was employed variously as; a carter, spirit salesman, miner, blacksmith, Corporation lorryman and Corporation waste paper collector.

Extract from Connelly family tree including birth, death and census documentation

As the family grew, so the world continued to change; a new machine for the transmission of pictures was invented by a Scottish engineer, John Logie Baird, the first 'talkie', a film with dialogue, was being shown in cinema's, a drug named penicillin had been discovered and would revolutionise infection control and to Julia's delight, women over the age of twenty-one were given the vote.

During Julia's pregnancy, Bernard had taken on other responsibilities. At work he had become the organising secretary for the Union of Shop and Distributive Allied Workers (USDAW), a role he would maintain for many years, and in the church he had become both a member of the Knights of St Columba, a Catholic fraternal service order founded in Glasgow in 1919 and named in honour of Saint Columba, and Secretary to it's Provincial Council.

When the Wall Street crash happened in America in 1929 it seemed really distant from Portobello but it was not long before the effects reached British shores. After struggling to pay for the consequences of the First World War, the crash caused prices to fall and exports to half causing a massive hike in the already high level of unemployment and plunging industrial areas into poverty. One in five people were unemployed at that time with many needing to take advantage of the the Liberal Party's welfare reforms begun in 1906 which included an unemployment benefit. This gave many destitute workers some much needed financial assistance.

Bernard was lucky and retained his job at the Co-operative and at the beginning of the new decade, Julia gave birth to their third child, Bernard Francis, on 16 February 1930. Bernard's love of his work and the church was only superseded by his love for his family. He doted on his children but space at Ramsay Place was becoming very restrictive. In the valuation roll of 1930 Bernard is named as proprietor at number six and also noted on the electoral roll at that address are his wife Julia, mother Mary and sister Elizabeth. By then Bernard's siblings, who were all over twenty-two years old, had lives of their own and had either moved out or their dislike of politicians meant they did not appear on the voters roll.

It took another three years, two births, Leonard Vincent, 8 July 1932 and Thomas Anthony, 13 December 1933, and a promotion at work before a new house became available and the family moved to a top floor flat at 5 Northfield Broadway, closer to the centre of Edinburgh by a mile.

Bernard's extra curricular activities on behalf of the church saw him involved in the 'Platers Club' in Oxford, a Catholic society which met to discuss the Church's social teaching and its relevance to questions of the day and seen by many in the church as something of an elite element or upmarket offshoot of the CSG or Catholic Social Guild which had operated since 1909. Undoubtedly one of the topics of conversation would have been the signing by Pope Pius XI on behalf of the Catholic Church of a Concordat, an agreement with the Vatican, allowing Hitler, then führer of the National Socialist German Workers Party (or Nazi Party) and Chancellor of Germany to 'increase his power in Germany without opposition from the Catholic Church, in return for the latter being allowed to run its schools and youth movement without interference'. However, Hitler did not keep his promise and by 1935 there was friction between the Catholic Church and the Nazis. At that time 40% of Germans were Catholic.

Plater college was founded in 1922 in memory of the Father Charles Dominic Plater S.J., who had been instrumental in founding the Catholic Social Guild in 1909, giving the Catholic Social Movement its first organizational structure in England. The College was originally called the Catholic Workers' College, and was located on Walton Well Road in Oxford where it remained until 1955, when it moved to Boars Hill. It offered further education with an emphasis on Catholic social teaching to students who had vocational qualifications, those who had entered into employment directly from school or some who had missed other educational opportunities. It was considered a sister-school to secular Ruskin College, on which it was modelled. Plater College members were Affiliate Members of Oxford University. The college closed in 2004 and the land sold.

Wikipedia

Bernard's promotion to Manager at the Joppa Co-operative store branch on the outskirts of the city meant a twenty minute walk, which he preferred, or a bus ride in bad weather and as a keen walker and rambler all his life, there was no piece of the Edinburgh hill 'Arthurs Seat' that he hadn't trekked over, walking to work in the morning was not a problem. Time to think was key with perhaps the occasional diversion to early morning mass at St John's where his continuing work with the Knights of St Columba saw him regularly visiting sick and elderly parishioners.

The Northfield Broadway houses and flats, constructed after a competition had been held for various

parcels of development, had low density housing laid out in mainly three storey blocks with lots of garden and open plan spaces. The layout and construction were award winning and encouraged healthier lifestyles than could be imagined in the smoke laden and still odorous city of Edinburgh, also known as 'auld reekie' or 'old smokey'.

The top floor flat at number Five had a living room facing the front of the house, a large kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom. From the front window the scenery view took your eyes across the Figgate burn and new park then onwards towards the sea at Joppa and beyond. On a winters day the grey of the distant sea merged with the greys of the sky so other than the pale greens of the Figgate Park directly in front of the home or the muted tones of general housing, everything seemed to blend into a dull, unpolished pewter looking landscape. Of course it was different in the flat; light was electric and heat throughout came from a coal fire, with the coal needed to feed it's flames being carried up by the oldest boys from the store on the ground floor.



*Bernard, Julia, Frank, Michael and baby Leo circa 1934 – Private Collection*

With seven mouths to feed Bernard's wife Julia had to be thrifty. Although Bernard was managing a shop his salary, probably about £150 annually, would not go far so Julia mended and passed down clothes from child to child. Food was fulfilling with porridge a staple at breakfast time and eggs regularly on the menu. Julia may have shopped in Bernard's store but as scrupulously honest as he was, she would have been charged the same as any other customer.

In 1936, after King George V died of a chronic lung condition, Bernard mourned him as did the rest of the kingdom. He followed the sad news closely in his daily one-penny newspaper including the dead King's succession by his eldest son, Edward VIII, who was to be crowned later in year. Until then however, life must go on.

Bernard's role with the USDAW Union began taking him away from home regularly through the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. His travels, including those by train to far flung destinations, meant on his return he had many stories to tell to the children about what he had seen. The children, now; ten, eight, six, four and three, would sit by the glowing fire and listened intently to his exploits;

'His train was already moving out from Kings Cross station. He ran alongside and spotting a door window open, he threw his small case through and climbed in after it to applause from other passengers...'

Brian Connelly October 2021

Edward VIII had reigned for less than a month when a constitutional crisis arose regarding his proposal to marry Wallis Simpson, an American who had been twice married. After a brief period on the throne, he abdicated in December 1936 after less than a year as King.

The following year was relatively quiet with the older boys following their father into St John's

primary school and spending their free time in the fields in front of the house leading down to the Figgate Park, where they fished with net and jam jar in the small but interesting burn. The year progressed in quiet harmony and the family listened on the wireless as George VI was crowned with all the pomp and ceremony only Britain could envisage and present. Soon after this national event and with much delight, Julia gave birth to the couple's first girl and a sister for the boys. Anne Margaret Rosemary Patricia was born on Thursday 5 August 1937. Youngest son Tom was moved in to the bedroom beside his brothers to allow Julia to feed the baby in peace and quiet and allow it the necessary naps, without too much intrusion. How the loving parents managed that with five boys remains one of life's mysteries...

At the beginning of 1938 a German document entitled 'The Fatefull Year', part of the radicalization of the Nazis' Jewish policy, was published. German expansionism escalated with the annexation of Austria during the 'Anschluss' or 'political union' and Britain's domestic preparations for war accelerated. The first refugees reached Britain as part of the 'Kindertransport' in the December when the first of of 10,000 Jewish children between the ages of five and seventeen arrived in Britain from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Many were given homes by British families, or lived in hostels. Very few of them ever saw their parents again. After Poland was invaded by Germany in September 1939, Britain had no option but to declare war.

Bernard was thirty-seven and had already lived through one world war. He had read of preparations the Government was making regarding the conscription of single men between the ages of twenty and twenty-two but then everything changed after war was declared;



September 1939 - The National Service (Armed Forces) Act imposed conscription on all males aged between 8 and 41 who had to register for service. Those medically unfit were exempted, as were others in key industries and jobs such as baking, farming, medicine, and engineering.

UK Parliament

Oldest son James was still only thirteen so still too young to serve but Bernard, at thirty-seven was fit and active so Julia was worried about what might happen, as was the Government of the time under Neville Chamberlain. In the January a 'Schedule of Reserved Occupations (Provisional)' had been drafted to prevent a recurrence of the affect of poor controls over manpower that occurred during the First World War when many industries suffered severe shortages as too many specialists were sent to the front. The scheme covered almost five million men in a huge range of jobs which included; railway and dockworkers, miners, farmers, agricultural workers, school teachers and doctors, amongst others. Ages varied widely; a lighthouse keeper was 'reserved' at 18, while a trade-union official could be called up until the age of 30.

Bernard found a copy of the document and together with Julia they read through the fine print of it. Near the beginning in the explanatory notes, they saw;



'If an age is printed opposite an occupation in the Schedule, this means that the restriction as regards that occupation applies only to volunteers of or above that age.'

and then;

A working owner or working principal of a business (unless his occupation is specifically included in the Schedule) should be regarded as coming within the foreman group of his appropriate trade

So, in Bernards position as 'store manager', he would be included in a specific group. After five pages of small print, their tired eyes alighted on the detail at the bottom of page eleven and with some relief, under 'Distributive Trades (Retail)' they read;

Cork and bark worker .. .. 30	macist) .. .. .
<i>Crane Driver—see Stationary Engine Driver</i>	<i>Distributive Trades (Retail)</i>
<i>Cutler, Scissors Maker</i>	District manager, inspector, manager .. .. . 35
Foreman, charge hand .. .. 23	Buyer .. .. . 35
Forger (hand) .. .. . 23	Shop walker .. .. . 35
Forger, goffer, cutter-out, bolsterer (machine) .. .. 23	Shop assistant, salesman, counter hand .. .. . 35
Heater (cutlery) .. .. . 23	Bookstall attendant .. .. . 35
Annealer, softener .. .. . 23	Stall keeper .. .. . 35
Hardener, temperer .. .. . 23	Outdoor salesman, collector, roundsman .. .. . 35

Then age restriction almost jumped off the page, No conscription over the age of Thirty-five. It must have been a huge relief for Julia although Bernard's thoughts remain hidden behind his enigmatic smile. He did not, currently, have to serve.

With the threat of local bombing by German aircraft, the Government had taken steps to protect the most vulnerable and valuable commodity, the children. Within days of the announcement of war, a letter was received by the couple, along with almost one and a half million other families throughout Britain, explaining that an evacuation was to take place. The letter outlined; what was to happen, when, and what the children should take with them to their temporary, possibly up to a year, homes including winter and under clothes, plimsolls, night attire and of course their gas masks.

After much discussion and emotion, the couple packed up the items noted in the letter and within what seemed like just hours, walked Bernard Francis, Leo and Tom to their primary school where their coats and baggage were tagged before they were shepherded onwards to the railway station, just a few hundred yards away, for the short trip to an estate in the small community of Spott, some two miles south west of Dunbar in East Lothian.

The community of Spott supported almost 350 people in 1939 with the majority of menfolk being employed towards the northern end of the parish in farming, the sawmill and other mills. Some young women from the Land Army were also employed and drove tractors and probably helped collect the children for the two-mile journey in a car or a farm lorry to the 'big house' where they were to live. The boys would all attend the local primary school and help out on the estate farm after daily lessons.

The County of East Lothian was peppered with twenty small aerodromes, supporting, in the main, grassy air strips. Boys, of any age, would have been excited by the noise and sights of various aircraft climbing and diving across the sky in as yet, mock battles against the German air force but the countryside was also brimming with wildlife and young Francis in particular would grow to

love the area and the people who shared it, for many years afterwards.

Weeks after the boys were evacuated on 8 December 1939 Julia performed her seventh miracle and Kathleen Mary Theresa Helena was born.

Julia was now thirty-eight and a mother to seven. The little free time she had saw her engaged, as Bernard was, talking to and helping older and infirm neighbours and knitting or crafting useful objects to use or sell. She was as devout as Bernard and attended church every Sunday with the children in tow. The family didn't yet have a 'named' pew in the church but always got there early enough so that they would be able to sit near the front, and the altar, where the mass was spoken by the priest facing away from the congregation. Most of the children had attended their first communion and so were able to join the line of adults, at the appropriate time in the service, as they moved slowly towards the front of the church to receive the sacrament.

Early in 1940, as the threat lessened, the evacuated boys returned home. The oldest boys, James and Michael, had finished primary school and now attended Holy Cross secondary, halfway across the town, where subjects such as; Latin, science and maths were the norm. Bernard encouraged them and the other children to enjoy education but also participate in extra-curricular activities such as football, netball, cub-scouts, scouts, guides and choirs. There was never a dull moment in the Connelly household.

By May 1940, the German army had defeated France with a strategy called 'blitzkrieg', or 'lightning war', which used speed, flexibility and surprise to execute manoeuvres. Paris fell on 14 June and France capitulated on 25 June. Hitler had achieved in a matter of weeks what the German army had failed to do after four years of desperate fighting on the Western Front of World War One. Thousands of allied troops had to be evacuated from Dunkirk and whilst losing the war seemed nonsensical and even impossible, the news reaching the family as they and their neighbours helped erect a 'war bunker' in the back garden made it seem all too real and possible.

The house at Northfield Broadway, still standing today, had given the family a new lease of life but time and more children meant yet again it was too small for their needs. An application to the Corporation was made for something bigger, and then the wait began.

Bernard's mother Mary, sister Mary and Mary's husband, James Fallon, all lived at Ramsay Place and his sister Elizabeth lived on the High Street, all in Portobello, so many of the children's aunts and uncles were within easy walking distance for visits. All of them would have used the Co-operative store although more likely to be the one in Portobello as opposed to Bernard's managed one in Joppa. The cost of food in shops fluctuated significantly depending on availability. Flour and bread seemed to stay about the same (7d and 2 ½d or about £1.64 and 91p today) but sugar had gone up by 25% between 1939 and 1941 and milk had gone up by 17% to 17d equal to £3.64p for a pint today.

To try and ease the burden on families the Government issued a pamphlet 'make do and mend' which came from the British Ministry of Information and showed housewives useful tips on how to be both frugal and stylish in times of harsh rationing. With its thrifty design ideas and advice on reusing old clothing, the pamphlet was an indispensable guide for households. Tips included unpicking old jumpers to re-knit chic alternatives; turning men's clothes into women's; as well as darning and altering.

*Left - Co-operative store at 46 Portobello High Street – Courtesy Portobello Heritage Trust*



A history of the Co-operative society was published in 1934 and according to that history, in 1846 the Co-operative movement was in its infancy and there were no overall guidelines to help draw up a constitution for the proposed Portobello society. This, however, only served to ‘emphasise the courage and initiative shown by the pioneers of our society’. Several local men acquired premises at 77 Portobello High Street and it grew rapidly.

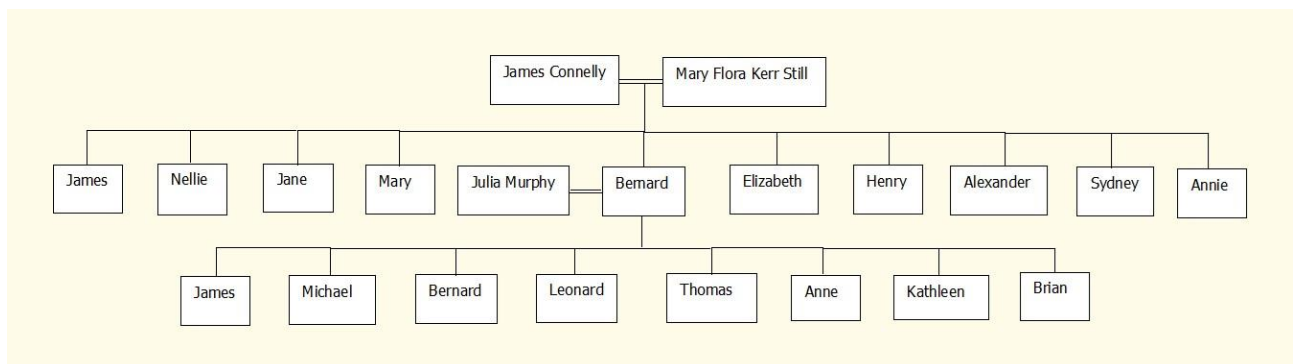
In 1872, premises were purchased at what became number 42 High Street. These were converted into a large store with bake-house below and manager’s house above. Expansion on this site continued until it was decided to build new premises which opened in 1882. The business now consisted of a grocery, bakery, butchery and drapery departments. These became the central premises of the society. Several of the symbols of co-operation, including the handshake of friendship and the beehive of industry still adorn the building and there is also a stone plaque on the front of the building with the intertwined society initials carved into it.

At some point land was leased in nearby Windsor Place to graze cattle and sheep and the society ran a fleet of motor and horse vans which serviced the surrounding area. New branches were eventually opened at 201 High Street, the King’s Road, Niddrie Mill and nearby Joppa.

The war continued but at last the Soviets joined the allies after Germany broke its pact with them. News on the radio included a terrible attack on American forces at Pearl Harbour which subsequently meant the Americans officially joined the war and U-boat packs roamed the Atlantic but were disrupted following the capture of an Enigma machine leading to the British breaking German codes.

Julia had fallen pregnant again in the March and was due at Christmas but as the birth drew near, Granny Mary, who was now 73, fell ill and the continuous coughing she suffered from turned out to be bronchitis. She died in late November at the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh with her home address noted as 5 High Street, Portobello, where daughter Elizabeth's resided. Whether she had moved there whilst she was ill or something else occurred has yet to be determined.

Just a month later, the last of the family’s siblings, Brian Norman, was born on Christmas Day 1941 to a world at war. The Northfield House was even more crowded now with sisters Anne and



*Bernard Connelly Family Tree*

Kathleen sharing a camp bed at the foot of Bernard and Julia’s bed whilst Tommy and Brian joined their brothers in the front room.

The war continued apace when the British colony of Singapore surrendered to Japanese forces and the RAF started its 'thousand bomber raids' on German cities. Although the specific dates of Bernard's war service remain unconfirmed, he served in the Local Defence Volunteer force or LDV's. Sometimes called the 'Look, Duck and Vanish Brigade' which was renamed the 'Home Guard' after Winston Churchill took a personal interest. Volunteers aged between 17 and 65 generally had jobs during the day but continued to turn out 'unpaid' in the evening and at weekends. The Home Guard Handbook listed the main duties as: guarding important points, observation and reporting, immediate attack against small, lightly armed parties of the enemy and the defence of roads, villages, factories and vital points in towns to block enemy movement.

The boys, as boys do, followed the stories of war as it developed. They read about; the 'Battle of Midway', two battles at 'El Alamein', and the Battle of Stalingrad, which was to become one of the bloodiest battles in the history of warfare, with an estimated two million total casualties.

Rationing, which had been operating since 1939, became more severe. The Germans were successfully attacking Atlantic convoys carrying much needed supplies from America and other countries. Ration books were issued which allowed families to purchase rationed food and Julia had to queue up at various shops, there were no supermarkets yet, and hand over ration coupons in exchange for food. Butter, sugar, milk, cheese, eggs, bacon and ham, jam and even sweets were in short supply. Children were allowed one egg a week although many enjoyed powdered eggs as a substitute.

Julia had four sisters and two brothers. Three of the sisters; Mary, Annie, known Aunt Nana to the boys, and Helen, served in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service or QAIMNS and whilst occasionally they were together, operated for the most part in different theatres of war from Europe to the middle and Far East. Their occasional returns to Edinburgh meant the family all heard at first hand both their personal exploits and generally how the war was going where they were serving.

There was great excitement on 6 June 1944 when Allied forces land in Normandy on what was named 'D-Day' and started the liberation of France. It would take another year though and include, the liberation of Nazi concentration camps at Bergen-Belsen and two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan before the Germans and Japanese finally surrendered in August 1945 and peace was declared. Bernard was Forty-three.



*Tom, Leo, Anne, Katie and Brian circa 1944 – Private Collection*

The children were growing fast. James, the eldest at twenty-one and a diagnosed diabetic was training to be an accountant, Michael, two years younger, who was working as a clerk after leaving school at fifteen, had volunteered for the Home Guard and then the Army, where before the end of the war he may have lied about his age in order to serve in the Burmese Campaign. Specific details remain to be unearthed.

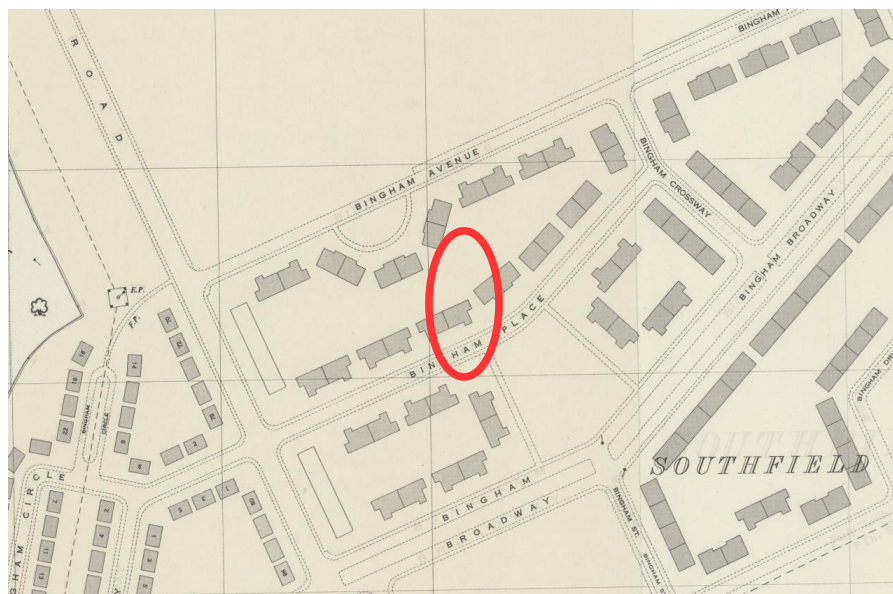
Francis, just seventeen, had joined the Royal Engineers and Leonard was at St Anthony's Secondary



School in Edinburgh and was fifteen.

Tom was at Holy Cross Secondary School and was two years older than Anne, who at ten, was still at St John's Primary School in Portobello with her eight-year-old sister Kathleen and youngest at six, Brian.

In the late 1940's a new housing estate was being built on one of the few remaining green areas of the original Parish of Duddingston on what was known to all as the South Field. Sandwiched between the Edinburgh Suburban and Southside railway line to its south and the Duddingston market garden to its north, whilst to the west lay the rolling grounds of Duddingston golf course and the suburban area of Niddrie. The Jewel miner's cottages, open farmland and eventually the sea, lay to the east.



*23 Bingham Place, Courtesy National Library of Scotland – OS map 1944-1970*

The houses, a mixture of flats, terraces and upper and lower villas, were interspersed with green areas suited to relaxation and sport, although most had shared or communal gardens as well. The family moved into an upper villa at 23 Bingham Place.

Accessed by a door at the side of the building, the stairs led to an open landing where Bernard accessed his shoe polishing paraphernalia and old newspapers and wood kindling for making the open fire were housed. The large lounge overlooked a green playing area 'the planny' to the front and a small fenced front garden was shared with the lower villa neighbours below. The kitchen, to the right of the door as you stepped in was a good size, although tight for a family of ten and the long hall had a number of bedrooms, a bathroom and a toilet leading from it, although one of the bedrooms overlooking the front would later be turned into a dining room.



*Bernard and Julia Connelly outside Bingham house c.1948 – Private Collection*



*The Upper Villa at 23 Bingham Place is shown at top right - Private Collection*

The 'planny', the naming reason for which has been lost to history, was a large area where games could be played, including football, although at some point signs noting 'no ball games' would be erected and of course subsequently ignored. The garden at the back was mostly laid to lawn enclosed by a wooden paling fence made from twisted hazel bound together with wire which would later be re-inforced with privet hedging at the bottom and sides. Cast-iron washing line poles were strung with thin rope, lowered to child height in the summers so that sheets could be draped over them and tents made.

Whilst there were no shops in the street, vans laden with edible products would arrive, regularly parking in the same location week after week, ready to sell products to the queuing housewives; On Sunday a vegetable van would tour, dispensing potatoes by the stone the equivalent of just over six kilo's today, the store van, run by the Co-operative, was laden with morning rolls and fresh bread, the smell of which lured adults and children alike, like bees around a honeypot, it came early each day and on Fridays the larger, walk-in, store van would tour. A fishmonger undoubtedly visited for fish-Fridays was a practice Catholic families observed. Of course, there were local shops too just a couple of streets away including a chemist, a fruit shop, a butcher, a fishmonger and a dairy. The family, in various guises, would live happily in the Bingham house for many years.

On the 5 July 1948 the National Health Service was born. The Parliamentary deliberations had been lengthy but the Labour health minister won the house over with his far-sighted view of good health for all. Aneurin or 'Nye' Bevan had at last managed to gather together some 2700 plus hospitals and the attendant doctors, nurses, dentists, opticians and pharmacists, who on that day began working for the many health boards dotted across the country.

After enrolling the family in the new service, Bernard and Julia were delighted to find out that payment for James' drugs for his diabetes would now be free. The last medication they had received freely were the children's diphtheria vaccinations in 1940, started just a year before youngest child Brian was born. This was the first vaccine of the bacteriological age to be offered freely to children in Britain and although various programmes effectively controlled the disease worldwide by the 1980's, it still exists today and continues to kill.

Little is known specifically about Bernard and Julia during the 1950's, perhaps because their focus was on their growing children and extended family:

Son Francis had been demobbed from the Royal Engineers with a serious chest illness which was diagnosed in early 1950 as Pulmonary Tuberculosis or TB. Initially he was hospitalised in the military hospital in Glasgow, BMH Cowglen, but was transferred for an operation and convalescence to Glen O Dee hospital near Banchory in Aberdeenshire. He spent over two years in hospitals but still managed to meet his future wife, Jean Buchanan, whilst recuperating. The couple married in September 1954 and went on to have Bernard and Julia's first grandchild, Frank Taylor [that's me...] in February 1956 followed by Peter Bernard, named after Bernard, in July 1957.

Julia's sister Mary, younger than her by almost five years, decided to emigrate to New Zealand about 1950 and did so after a career as a nurse including service during the Second World War in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserves, QAIMNS(R) or the QA's in short. At the time of her emigration, the Governments of Australia and New Zealand had initiated a strategy called the 'Assisted Passage Migration Scheme' and nicknamed in the destination countries as 'ten pound poms'. She married Edward Cullinan in New Zealand and continued nursing in her new home country.

Julia's youngest sister Helen also got the travel bug and followed her brother Thomas to Toronto in Canada but after staying a couple of years she decided to return to Scotland where she married Tony Munley in 1953. Having followed the same career paths as sisters Mary and Annie, in 1959 she too decided, at two months pregnant, that New Zealand sounded better and emigrated with Tony and daughter Anne Marie.

In the mid 50's, Julia's parents, who lived just a short walk away at 2 Wauchope Square in the Niddrie area of Edinburgh, were also getting older and both suffered from ill health. Alas in October 1955 her father Michael Murphy passed away from mitral heart valve disease and chronic bronchitis and was followed just six months later by his wife Annie when she was visiting daughter Helen in the Old Mill Cottage at Carstairs. Annie's death certificate noted the cause as hypertension, coronary thrombosis and senility.

Julia and Bernard's eldest son James had begun working as an accountant in the oil industry after university and was considering a life abroad but more research is needed as so little is known about him.

Tom was employed for a short time as a Scientific Assistant in mechanical engineering research near East Kilbride in Lanarkshire but he saw his future as being within the church. He was accepted for training in the priesthood where he attended the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris, France but like brother Francis before him contracted tuberculosis. He recuperated well though and did not have the same level of hospitalisation that Francis suffered.

Anne, the oldest daughter, who had completed her studies at Holy Cross in the early 50's was employed as a commercial clerkess and had met and become engaged to Andrew Gillan from Musselburgh, who was a commercial cashier at the time. Arrangements were made for the banns to be read and the wedding ceremony conducted in St John's church. The wedding was held on 7 February 1959 and celebrations continued at the British Legion club on Baileyfield Road just a few hundred yards away.

Daughter Kathleen was next. Finishing her studies at St Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic

(Convent) School in central Edinburgh she became a legal clerk before meeting Robert or Roy Nelson. Roy was a scientist and was to continue studies and work in Canada so after marrying at St John's church on 21 September 1959, the couple emigrated and their first child, Carol Patricia, was born in Montreal 1 August 1960.

Son Leonard, who had now left the Navy, worked as television salesman with Radio Rentals in Edinburgh and was also engaged to be married. After a short courtship he and Eileen McRae Lamb who was born in Edinburgh in 1940 married. They had their first son, Brian, on 19 July 1960.

Second oldest son Michael had a number of jobs since he left the Army in 1948 including with the Dental Estimates Board and British Rail where he was eventually responsible for supervising refreshment rooms and restaurant cars in the Western Region before applying for and being granted a position with the Hong Kong Police as a Sub-Inspector. He met Sarah, known as Sadie, McLaughlin King whilst she was working at the Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire during one of his home leave periods and the two decided that Hong Kong could be an interesting place to live and so Sadie followed Michael back there and eventually they married in October 1959. Son Paul was born 12 August 1960 in Kowloon hospital.

When Bernard had time, he bought the newspapers and would have read about the beginning of the Space Age with the launch of Sputnik I by Russia and the establishment of the North American Space Agency, NASA. He certainly had time to read most if not all of the many church or Catholic related books and magazines that found their way into the house. He had particularly high standards relating to his Catholicism and daughter Kathleen recalls her mother shouting "he's done it again!" on discovering that Bernard had removed what he described as "unacceptable pages" from her monthly Catholic Book Club books. Goodness knows what he would have thought about today's 'open' society.

Still maintaining his daily ritual of attending church before work, much of Bernard's free time was spent helping people through his membership of the Knights of St Columba. When he did have an hour or so he liked walking and had bought a camera to record what he saw and a slide projector to entertain family and friends with his efforts.

After some thirty-five years in the grocery trade, in 1960 he was confirmed as a "Master Grocer". Research is ongoing to determine the relationships with that trade and the Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh or the Worshipful Company of Grocers based in London. Bernard celebrated the fact he had come so far.

The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh are the trade and craft bodies of Edinburgh in a similar way as the Livery companies are in London. The incorporations are trade organisations whose members are or were 'craftsmen' or 'tradesmen' manufacturers, known as 'freemen masters' of their particular trade. The freemen of the incorporations, who historically were all supposed to be burgesses of the burgh, were expected to employ journeymen and to train apprentices.

Edinburgh Riding of the Marches.com

The Worshipful Company of Grocers is one of the 'Great Twelve' Livery Companies of the City of London, ranking second in the order of precedence - in 1515, the Court of Aldermen of the City of London settled an order of precedence for the 48 livery companies then in existence. The Fraternity was entrusted with the duty of preventing the adulteration of spices and drugs, as well as with the charge of the King's Beam, which weighed the bulk merchandise in which they dealt. By at least 1373 the Fraternity was known as the Company of Grocers. The name Grocer probably derives from the Latin, grossarius, one who buys and sells in the gross, in other words,

In one decade, the Bingham house had become almost empty of his own children, except youngest son Brian who was still at home but working now with the Inland Revenue. The house was rarely



quiet though and Bernard and Julia continued to watch their grandchildren play by the fire, in the garden and across on the planney where their own children had played before them.

In 1961 after many financial donations were collected by the church groups, a musical organ was purchased and moved from Hawick, in the Scottish Borders, to be rebuilt in St John's by church Rushforth & Dreaper, a company established in Liverpool. At last the singing voices of the choir and congregation would be properly accompanied by an organ which would fill St John's church with deep booming and high pitched almost glass shattering sounds filling every corner of the building. The parishioners celebrated.

Hardly had the sounds of the last hymn died away though when the world lurched towards disaster. The Cuban missile crisis set the world teetering on the brink of Armageddon in 1962 after the Soviet Union established nuclear missiles on the island of Cuba following an abortive attempt to invade the island by the United States, known as the Bay of Pigs. The nearest US border was less than 90 miles away and easily within range of the missiles. An American Naval blockade was begun until the Soviet leader Khrushchev, after lengthy negotiations, offered to remove the missiles as long as President Kennedy of the US promised not to invade the island. This happened and the real threat of a worldwide nuclear war was averted. The American President, John F Kennedy, was assassinated a year later in November 1963.

Julia's brother Thomas died in Montreal, Canada aged fifty-seven.

At about the same time Bernard and Julia's last remaining child living at home, Brian, bought himself a scooter and delighted in giving rides around Bingham to his young nephews and nieces. He had applied for a job in Newcastle with the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance at Benton Park, and so was not long away from flying the nest.

Benton Park View is located in High Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne and is a multi-agency site of the UK Government. The complex is one of the largest secure civilian government complexes in Europe. The site was created with the founding of the UK welfare system in the late 1940s and consisted of a series of 'H Blocks, So named due to their similarity to the letter 'H' when viewed from above.

In 1965 Bernard took over as the Manager of the Co-operative at 23 Magdalene Drive, closer to home than the previous shop. His own values were so alike the Co-operative's it's difficult to spot the difference;

*"self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others".*

*The Co-operative Values*

He still maintained his role as the local Union of Shop and Distributive Allied Workers (USDAW) secretary as well as his many church commitments. Julia too was busy and helped out regularly at the old folk's home at Lambs House in Edinburgh. The building was a restored 17<sup>th</sup> century merchants house said to have been built on the site of a house visited by Mary, Queen of Scots after her landing on Scottish soil. As well as helping out, Julia handmade a number of items for sale to assist funding both for the old folks and her church. From foam cut-outs of swans filled with bath soaps to fancy jars full of rose smelling bath salts, she rarely had idle hands.

With Bernard now sixty-three and Julia sixty-four, the couple began thinking about retirement. Son James lived in America, and two of Julia's sisters lived in New Zealand, so perhaps a visit to either place for a holiday would be in order. Bernard was still as thin as he had ever been and very active

and fit from all the walking to and fro he did. He dressed smartly, ensuring for the most part he wore a suit and tie except when relaxing when his shirt sleeves might be rolled up. His hair was thinning but still dark, he didn't smoke, ate sparingly and the few times I ever saw him with a drink in his hand, it was usually a sherry.

In July of 1967, one of Bernard's sisters, Elizabeth, died. She had lived for many years in Rosefield Avenue in Portobello, at the far end of the street from where she and Bernard had been born. After marrying William Cunningham from the coal merchants of the same name seen regularly around Edinburgh, she had two children of her own and had survived her twin Henry by almost almost her whole lifetime.

Bernard was understandably upset and was further shocked by newspaper articles about the recent Abortion Act legislation which made abortion, up to 28 weeks' gestation, legal on a wide number of grounds in all of Great Britain, except Northern Ireland. The Roman Catholic Church had consistently opposed abortion as evidence of sexual sin but has not always regarded it as homicide. From 1750 through to 1965 excommunication was the punishment for all abortions but after that it was condemned as the taking of life rather than as a sexual sin. Bernard had strong views on the subject but rarely discussed them openly. [The current Pope recognizes that the moment of ensoulment is unknown but condemns abortion in all cases]

Son James facilitated the couples retirement holiday wishes with a world cruise in 1968 and Bernard and Julia packed eagerly for the trip of a lifetime. Met briefly by son Brian at Southampton The couples beaming smiles would have lit up the docks



*Bernard and Julia with son Brian at Southampton docks 1968 – Private collection*

James and Hermione were to join the couple for a period whilst they sailed on the *Southern Cross*.



*Bernard and daughter-in-law Hermione playing table tennis in the ship December 1968 – Private Collection*

*Panama Canal*



*Shaw Savill Line official card of Southern Cross, at Tahiti, issued circa 1955 before the ship entered service – Unknown artist*

The ship was built by Harland & Wolff, Belfast, in 1955 for a new round-the-world passenger

service of the Shaw Savill Line. She carried 1100 one-class passengers and no freight. The continuous circuit took 76 days to complete from Southampton, calling at Trinidad, Curacao, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, Fiji, Wellington, Auckland, Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle, Durban, Capetown, Las Palmas and eventually back to Southampton.

Typically Bernard took work with him on the cruise, not so much in paperwork but in his thoughts as can be seen from the piece he wrote, an extract of which is shown below:

*Impressions of New Zealand, by Bernard Connelly, (Superannuated Employee)*

*Sailing into Wellington at 7am. On a lovely sunny morning, is an unforgettable experience. Tier upon tier of wooden houses, iron roofed, painted in gay colours - set in the hillside around the bay, and a profusion of flowers, give a welcome only outmatched with the hospitality of the New Zealanders themselves...*

*... conferences of Retail Trades and Shop Assistants Union, both organisations stated unanimously "they would fight to keep trading days as presently operated"...*

*The status symbol for "teenagers" is the number of surfboards one has on roof of car. It does seem an anomaly that a youngster can drive a car in a busy city, yet if under 21 years found in a public bar can be charged...*

*In a country like New Zealand, slightly larger than Great Britain, with a population of some two and a half million of whom only 180,000 are Maori, the question is often asked can Maori culture survive. I was privileged to be invited to a Maori Culture Group concert. In harmony rhythm, colour and action, it was sheer delight. Like all minority groups, there will always be those whose ambition it is to foster, maintain and promote Maori culture.*

*On our coming to New Zealand we were met with "MAERE MAI", (Welcome). On leaving we fondly say "HAERE RA", (farewell)!*

*Bernard Connelly 1968*

A few months before the cruise began the couple had moved house for the last time. The top floor flat at 5/7 Northfield Grove in Edinburgh overlooked the Figgate Park and shortened their daily journey to St John's church considerably. On two levels, it also had a small balcony which could be used in the warmer months. One drawback was the innumerable flights of stairs from the ground floor although there was a chute on the landing for sending rubbish down to the bins. Son Francis and his family had lived just three hundred yards away from the flat until 1967 when they moved out of the prefab they had occupied for thirteen years and it was demolished to make way for new

housing, including the flats.

By 1970 the happy couple were settled. Regular visitors to the house included their many grandchildren: Michael (now returned from Hong Kong) and Sadie's children Paul and Christopher; Francis and Jean's son's Frank, Peter, David and James and daughter Margaret; Leo and Eileen's Brian, Margaret, Derek and Sharon; Anne and Andrew's son Norman and daughter Sandra; Kathleen and Roy's Carol, Roderick and Susan and Brian and Terrie's daughter Karen. Son Michael would be born in 1972.

Only a month after Bernard had buried his sister Mary, Bernard and Julia's son Michael, aged just forty-three was killed in a tragic accident at the Royal Commonwealth Swimming Pool in Edinburgh, on 10 March 1971. The pool was a favourite destination for families with a very shallow end where children could play easily in the water and this detail was unknown to Michael when he dived in and hit his head on the shallow bottom. Having returned from Hong Kong where he had risen to the rank of Depute Divisional Inspector CID, Michael had worked in various positions whilst he studied first at College then University in Edinburgh where he gained his MA. He was only three months short of completing his formal teacher training at Moray House College when he died, leaving behind a young widow and two children aged ten and seven.

Bernard's oldest sister Nellie lived until she was seventy-six, a decent age for someone born in the nineteenth century. Like most of his siblings, Nellie had lived in Portobello all her life including during her forty-eight year marriage to local man James Connor. James, who had been a police detective and later a sergeant, had owned a fruit shop in the small town and would live for another seven years, dying at the age of eighty.

Much of Bernard's free time was given up to church activities. He still walked everywhere and continued to visit people who were aged or infirm. In late 1972, Bernard, and his son's Francis and Tom drove the nearly five hundred miles to Deal in Kent where Francis's son Frank was finishing the first six months of his Royal Marines Commando training. A demonstration of various skills by the twenty or so trainees, from an original batch of sixty, included marching, weapon skills and of course unarmed combat and was followed by various presentations. Bernard had brought his own gift for his sixteen-year-old grandson, a brown leather writing case, hoping perhaps that the young man would keep in touch wherever he went. Almost fifty years later I still have it.

The couple celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1975 and the family enjoyed dinner at the local Lady Nairn Hotel. Much water had flowed under the bridge since the children's births and all were present, except Michael of course.





*Golden Wedding celebrations 14 sept 1975; Brian, Francis (Frank), Bernard & Julia, Leonard (Leo), Anne, James, Kathleen (Katie) and Thomas (Father Tom) – Private Collection*

Bernard had long since invested in a small portable typewriter and used it regularly. The extracts below from a single paged letter in 1976 to daughter Kathleen and her husband Roy illustrate how much news and information he shared:

21st. April 1976

Dear K'leen & Roy,

Many thanks for your Easter card, also to Susan for mail received to-day. We will give Susan's message to Mrs. Swanston, when she comes home from Canada, where she is for some weeks yet, looking after her daughter. We had a number of the family here for Easter. Jean & F. & family including Frankie home on leave, Peter & Rose (who wasn't too well). Leo & Family. Sadie didn't like to come down, as Chris. is still in the wheel chair. She is feeling very low about the slow progress of Chris. who himself is very cheerful, but the bone is not growing. It didn't help much, when one of the doctor's said, "perhaps we should have amputated at first." We are encouraging her to

ending;

time whether leaving 8am or 10am. We can arrange that later, to suit you. We are quite pleased when Easter arrived for we seem to have had a busy time leading up to then, closing with Mid-night Easter Mass, which I but not Mum attended. Young Frankie drove me home as Jean, Jimmy and Margaret were there also. Had a meeting to day in Linburn Home for Blind (Disabled Advisory Committee). We are looking forward to our Austrian tour. Speaking to young Jim Connor (up for Easter). They had been to Innsbruck and really enjoyed it. Ursula is not making much progress, but always cheerful. Hope all have done well in Exams.

Love to all, *Mum Frank*

He never wasted an inch...

The seventies didn't bypass Bernard and Julia as they were keen observers of human nature.

Although he never drove, he was interested to see the many changes on the roads including much improved public and private transport. He may have observed local children riding their 'chopper' bicycles or bouncing around on space hoppers outside his flat. He bought a cassette recorder and had a microphone to enable dictation although I'm sure he typed up his own notes. Julia must have been underwhelmed when she replaced her loyal twin-tub washing machine with a front loader. I'm sure Bernard must have written to friends and family about the many strikes that occurred in the seventies including those by the postal workers, miners and dustmen, which led to the 'winter of discontent' in 1979, and I know he purchased a Video Cassette Recorder so that they might record favourite TV programmes when the couple were regularly out. Colour television was now the norm and son's, Francis and Leonard, both worked in the trade as salesmen. The country had also gone decimal, launched the first jet passenger aircraft, Concorde and Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister.

He hadn't yet tried a Rubik's cube nor owned a digital watch, and to my knowledge he never wore lycra or donned platform boots. He preferred choral music to glam rock, shaved every day and regularly attended his barbers to keep his hair neat. At seventy-seven he was still active and remarkably fit.

Bernard's youngest sister Annie died aged seventy-one in September 1979. She had married an 'English lad', Jack Ramsden, and moved to Uppingham in Leicestershire where she lived for many years. From Bernard's original nine siblings, there was now just younger brother Alexander, or Alec as he was known, who was also in his seventies.

The 80's decade started quickly when in February Lady Diana Spencer became engaged to Prince Charles, the heir to the throne. America announced they would boycott the Moscow Olympic Games in response to the Soviets invasion of Afghanistan, Britain didn't, and also announces that relations with Iran had broken down after they failed to release the fifty-two hostages held since November the previous year by a militant students. After having his children vaccinated years before, Bernard watched news from The World Health Organisation announcing that smallpox has been eradicated globally and was further heartened as he closely monitored the progress of the Solidarity movement, begun in a shipyard in Poland, which was the first free (not state-controlled) trade union in the communist bloc. The Catholic Church, whose Pope, Born Karol Józef Wojtyła and known as Pope John Paul II, was Polish. He had recently undertaken a lengthy tour in the country where he had prayed with almost one third of the population approximately thirteen million Catholics.

*"The Roman Catholic Church played an enormous social, political, and cultural role in the Polish People's Republic, and the fall of Communism would certainly have played out differently were it not for the Church's involvement".*

*Brian Porter - University of Michigan*

Bernard was incredibly proud of his church.

Bernard and Julia could look with pleasure as their grandchildren started families of their own. Their first great grandchild, Sarah Jane, was born to grandson Frank and his wife Jenny in 1978.

As the 1980 spring turned to summer then autumn, Julia complained of feeling unwell and attended her doctors. She became worse just as winter fell and suffered heart failure on 23 November 1980, whilst at home in bed. She was seventy-nine and she and Bernard had been married for fifty-five years. Her death certificate notes the cause of death as 'acute myocardial ischaemia' and 'coronary

insufficiency', which is a reduction in blood flow to the heart preventing the heart muscle from receiving enough oxygen. After a funeral service in St John's church where they had been married, she was buried in Mount Vernon Cemetery in Edinburgh not far from her mother and father's grave.



*Ann Murphy - Julia's sister, Julia and Bernard at the Northfield House 1968-Private Collection*



*Julia's grave at Mount Vernon Cemetery*

Life without Julia was difficult, not that he couldn't look after himself, but after a lifetime with her at his side it could become lonely. Family mattered deeply to Bernard and keeping in touch with them all ensured he was rarely alone. When they couldn't visit, they spoke on the phone.

Son James rang from New York where he had made his home and son Tom, who was parish priest at St Cadoc's in Cambuslang, was appointed as Press Officer to the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. Leo and Eileen's marriage had ended but Leo continued to care for his children at home.

Anne lived about half a mile away from her parents at Northfield Avenue with her second husband, Roy Cameron whilst Kathleen had become a social worker, had three children and lived near London with husband Roy. Youngest Brian was a diplomat with the Foreign Office, also living in London and lived with wife Terrie and their two children.

Bernard's visits to son Francis's home, usually on a Sunday after mass when ham or cheese rolls and milky coffee were consumed, were filled with sadness at this time as daughter-in-law Jean was terminally ill with ovarian cancer. The stress for the family was compounded because their eldest boy Frank, who was a serving Royal Marine, was sailing towards the Falklands war so Bernard scoured the daily papers and took press cuttings dealing with the conflict along for them both to read. Just days after young Frank returned from the war, his mum and Francis's wife Jean died.

Bernard threw himself into his church and his work with the Knights of St Columba.

In February 1985 he received a telephone call from daughter-in-law Hermione telling him that her husband and Bernard and Julia's eldest son James, had died of a heart attack whilst on holiday in Mexico. At fifty-eight, James and Hermione had remained childless but enjoyed their life in America.

Less than a month later Bernard's surviving brother Alec also died leaving behind his wife of fifty-four years, Josephine O'Neill, and their four adult children.

In April 1986 the international news was full of graphic pictures and videos of an accident in the



Ukraine. A nuclear power plant had gone into meltdown with the resulting explosions rupturing the reactor core and destroying the reactor building. The ensuing radioactive fallout at Chernobyl saw a number of deaths from the initial explosion but many more from the radiation which significantly affected nearby Belarus and the Ukraine landscape. Even Britain was affected when the possibility of affected sheep in the north of Scotland and northern England meant restrictions on movement of the animals was imposed for a period.

Bernard went on holiday in June and was dropped by son Francis at Waverley train station in Edinburgh for the short break. The destination is unknown but likely to have been to see either Kathleen or Brian's family's. Prince Andrew married Sarah Ferguson at Westminster Abbey.

Nearing his eighty-fifth birthday in 1987, Bernard must have thought about slowing down, but he continued as before with his energetic approach to life undimmed. He was dismayed at the kidnapping of Terry Waite the special envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury whilst in Lebanon and although their faiths did not align, Bernard added his prayers to millions of others for his release.

A letter with an important seal appended dropped through his letter box one day advising him that the Pope had awarded him a medal and inviting him to a presentation in August. I don't know if he was allowed to tell anyone before the event but the days could not pass quickly enough and just weeks after his eighty-fifth birthday, Bernard was presented with a papal decoration for his more than sixty years of distinguished service to the church.

At the presentation in St John's church, Cardinal Gordon Joseph Gray, an Edinburgh and Holy-



*Bernard, Cardinal Gray, son Tom and grand-daughter Carol at St John's church – Private Collection*



*The Papal Cross*

Cross Academy man and head of the Catholic church in Scotland, presented Bernard with the 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' or Papal Cross 'for the Church and Pope' (Appendix 4).

The church was packed with parishioners and well-wishers and included many of his family. After mass and the presentation, many photographs were taken and his hand was shaken continuously.

To say he was delighted would understate matters, he was thrilled.

The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (Latin: For Church and Pope) decoration is an award of the Roman Catholic Church. It is also known as the "Decoration of Honour". The medal was established by Leo XIII on July 17, 1888, to commemorate his golden sacerdotal jubilee and was originally bestowed on those men and women who had aided and promoted the jubilee, and by other means assisted in making the jubilee and the Vatican Exposition successful. It is currently conferred for distinguished service to the church by lay people and clergy. It is the highest medal that can be awarded to the laity by the Pope.



Back in the peace and quiet of his home I can envisage Bernard reflecting on his life. His thoughts undoubtedly contained memories of his wife Julia and his family. Perhaps he had a small glass of sherry to celebrate.

He died on 21 March 1988 aged eighty-five. His heart, full of love for his fellow man, just gave out (Appendix 5 & 6). He outlived all of his nine siblings and two of his eight children. He had numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and too many friends to easily count. He is buried with his wife Julia in Mount Vernon Cemetery, even sharing the same headstone.

#### Endnote

I was lucky enough to know my two grandfathers; Duncan Buchanan, a miner, who died in 1972 aged seventy-two and Bernard. I remember them both with great affection but they were both very different people from a different era. They had different but noticeably high standards, Duncan typically dealt with everything outside the house whilst wife Margaret or Meg, dealt with everything inside – old style, but both loving and caring. Bernard and Julia shared everything, including the washing up. I miss his straightforward style, his tin of boiled stripped sweets, his infectious smile and laugh and the man I knew as 'Big Granda', but that's another story.

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1902. BIRTHS in the DISTRICT of PORTOBELLO in the CITY of EDINBURGH

No.	Name and Surname.	When and Where born.	Sex.	Name, Birthplace, to Rank or Profession of Father, Name and Maiden Surname of Mother, Date and Place of Marriage.	Signature and Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Birth occurred.	When and Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
172	Bernard Connelly.	1902, July Twenty-ninth 5 hr. 30 AM Portobello Edinburgh	M.	James Connelly Porter Mary Connelly M. S. Mill 1891 November 14 Portobello	James Connelly Father Present	1902, August 9th Edinburgh William Barclay Registrar.
	William	1902, 8	M.	James Connelly Porter Mary Connelly M. S. Mill 1891 November 14 Portobello	James Connelly Father Present	1902, August 9th Edinburgh William Barclay Registrar.

Bernard Connelly birth certificates

1911 CONNELLY, BERNARD (Census 685/7 5/ 8) Page 8 of 30

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Civil Parish and Family Ward of		Municipal District or Civil Ward of		School District of	
Edinburgh Portobello		Edinburgh Portobello		Edinburgh Portobello	
No. of Inhabitants	ROAD, STREET, etc. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	ROOMS with one or more Windows	NAME and SURNAME of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	AGE in Years and Months
51	St. Mary's Lane	3	James Connelly	Head	34
			Mary Connelly	Wife	29
			John Connelly	Son	4
			John Connelly	Son	2
			John Connelly	Son	2
52	do	1	James Connelly	Head	51
			Mary Connelly	Wife	24
			John Connelly	Son	24
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	22
			John Connelly	Son	19
			John Connelly	Son	15
			John Connelly	Son	11
			John Connelly	Son	9
			John Connelly	Son	2
53	do	1	James Connelly	Head	35
			Mary Connelly	Wife	32
			John Connelly	Son	16
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	10
			John Connelly	Son	6
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	4
			John Connelly	Son	2
54	do	1	James Connelly	Head	35
			Mary Connelly	Wife	32
			John Connelly	Son	19
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	10
			John Connelly	Son	6
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	4
			John Connelly	Son	2
55	do	1	James Connelly	Head	35
			Mary Connelly	Wife	32
			John Connelly	Son	19
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	10
			John Connelly	Son	6
			Mary Connelly	Daughter	4
			John Connelly	Son	2

# Appendix 3 – Marriage Certificate

(Page 37.)

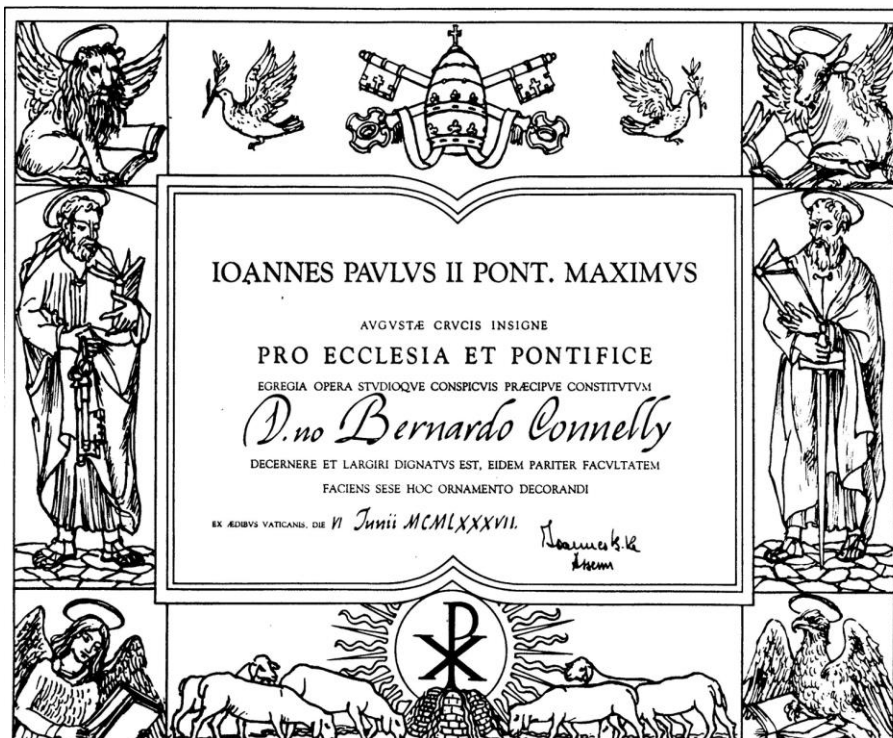
1925. MARRIAGES in the DISTRICT of PORTOBELLO in the CITY of EDINBURGH

No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Names (in full) of Parties, with Signatures. Rank or Profession, and whether Bachelor, Spinster, Widower, Widow, or Divorced.	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a Regular Marriage, Signature and Designation of Officiating Minister, and Signatures and Addresses of Witnesses. If an Irregular Marriage, Date of Decree of Declaration, or of Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
3	1925, on the Twelfth day of September, at St John's Roman Catholic Church, Portobello.	(Name in full) James Haslin. (Signature) James Haslin. Rank or Profession, and whether Bachelor, Spinster, Widower, Widow, or Divorced. Railway Engineer, Portobello.	30.	4, Bridge Street, Portobello.	Francis Haslin, Jr., (deceased), Mary Haslin, M. S. Rowley.	Signs A. E. Franklin, Rector of St John's Catholic Church, Portobello. Witness Joseph Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness Mary Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness	1925, September 15 <sup>th</sup> At Portobello.
74	1925, on the Twelfth day of September, at St John's Roman Catholic Church, Portobello.	(Name in full) Mabel Hynd. (Signature) Mabel Hynd. Rank or Profession, and whether Bachelor, Spinster, Widower, Widow, or Divorced. Spinster, Portobello.	25.	26 <sup>th</sup> , High Street, Portobello.	John Hynd, Mechanical Engineer, (deceased), Margaret Hynd, M. S. Bell, (deceased).	Signs A. E. Franklin, Rector of St John's Catholic Church, Portobello. Witness Joseph Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness Mary Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness	1925, September 14 <sup>th</sup> At Portobello.
	1925, on the Twelfth day of September, at St John's Roman Catholic Church, Portobello.	(Name in full) Bernard Connelly. (Signature) Bernard Connelly. Rank or Profession, and whether Bachelor, Spinster, Widower, Widow, or Divorced. Corporal Assistant, Portobello.	23.	6, Ramsay Place, Portobello.	James Connelly, Corporation Engineer, (deceased), Mary Connelly, M. S. Still, (deceased).	Signs A. E. Franklin, Rector of St John's Catholic Church, Portobello. Witness Joseph Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness Mary Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness	1925, September 14 <sup>th</sup> At Portobello.
	1925, on the Twelfth day of September, at St John's Roman Catholic Church, Portobello.	(Name in full) Julia Murphy. (Signature) Julia Murphy. Rank or Profession, and whether Bachelor, Spinster, Widower, Widow, or Divorced. Spinster, Portobello.	24.	Spring Gardens, Portobello.	Michael Murphy, Coal Miner, (deceased), Ann Murphy, M. S. McLeod.	Signs A. E. Franklin, Rector of St John's Catholic Church, Portobello. Witness Joseph Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness Mary Brown, 2 Bridge St, Portobello. Witness	1925, September 14 <sup>th</sup> At Portobello.

(1.) (2.) (3.) (4.) (5.) (6.) (7.)

W. T. Macdonald, Registrar.

# Appendix 4 – Papal Medal Certificate



SCO 25 March 1988

Page Three

## Press Officer's father dies

Mr Bernard Connelly — father of Fr. Tom Connelly, Catholic Press Officer to the Bishops' Conference of Scotland — died in Edinburgh on Tuesday.

Last year, Mr Connelly completed 60 years as secretary of the Edinburgh Provincial Council of the Knights of St. Columba. He received the Papal Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice in his home parish of St. John's, Portobello, last August.

Mr Connelly was involved with the Trade Union movement while working as a grocer with the Co-operative Society.

One of his duties as organising secretary of the Shop and Distributive Allied Workers, had to do with education which involved him in meetings with the Plater Club in Oxford.



Mr Bernard Connelly

At St. John's, Mr Connelly acted as sacristan and reader at daily Mass, and as a Eucharist Minister.

The Funeral Mass for Mr Connelly was taking place today (Friday) at 10 a.m. in his beloved St. John's, Portobello, where he attended Mass every morning at that time.

Mr Bernard Connelly aged 84. Mr Connelly was secretary of the Edinburgh Provincial Council of the Knights of St Columba for 60 years.

He received the papal cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* last August. He had a lifelong involvement with the trade union movement and was organising secretary of the Shop and Distributive Allied Workers. He was father of Fr Tom Connelly, press and media officer to the Scottish Bishops' conference.

## Appendix 6 – Death certificate



Archbishop's House  
42 Greenhill Gardens  
Edinburgh  
Scotland  
EH10 4BJ

Telephone: 031-447 3337  
25th March, 1988.

The Reverend Thomas Connelly,  
St Cadoc's,  
Rosebank Drive,  
Halfway,  
CAMBUSLANG,  
Glasgow, G72 8TD.

Dear Tom,

Please accept again my sympathy on the rather sudden death of your father.

I know I have already expressed my sympathy to you at Chesters but I want to renew my expression of sorrow. I am indeed sorry that I was unable to be with you either on Thursday evening or Friday morning - but I think I did explain that on Thursday evening I was to be in Glasgow at a previously arranged Peace Vigil for Central America while on the Friday morning I was saying a public Mass in St Andrew's, Ravelston, followed by a school visitation in Broxburn.

However, you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers at this time and I will be offering up Mass for the happy repose of the soul of your father. Looking back now I am indeed very pleased that I was able to commission him as a Minister of the Eucharist as well as honouring his years of service in the Parish and in the Trade Union Movement with his Papal Decoration. Of course, it was an added pleasure being with you and your family as well as your dad, for your Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

With my kind regards, Tom, and my prayers again for you and your family,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

*Keith*  
+ Keith Patrick,  
Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh.





## Extract of an entry in a REGISTER of DEATHS

DE 665949

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965

District No	742	Year	1988	Entry No.	129
Death registered in the district of Canongate and Portobello					
1. Surname Connelly				2. Sex M.	
Name(s) Bernard					
3. Occupation Grocer (Master) (retired)					
4. Marital status Widowed	5. Date of birth Year 1902 Month 7 Day 28	6. Age 85 years			
7. Name(s), surname and occupation of spouse(s) Julia Murphy					
8. When and where died 19.88 March Twentyfirst 2200 hours 5/7 Northfield Grove, Edinburgh					
9. Usual residence (if different from 8 above) _____					
10. Name(s), surname and occupation of father James Connelly Carter (deceased)			11. Name(s), surname(s) and maiden surname of mother Mary Connelly m.s. Still (deceased)		
12. Cause of death I (a) Cardiac arrest (b) Myocardial infarction (c) _____ II _____ _____					
Certifying registered medical practitioner G.J. McCulloch					
13. Informant's signature, qualification and address (Signed) F.B. Connelly Son 3/2 Coillesden House, Edinburgh					
14. When registered 19.88 3 23	Year 1988	Month 3	Day 23	15. (Signed) Jas. Morton Registrar	
16. _____					

Extracted from the Register of Deaths for the District of Canongate and Portobello

on 23rd March 1988

*Jas. Morton*

Registrar

The above particulars incorporate any subsequent corrections or amendments to the original entry made with the authority of the Registrar General

## Warning

It is an offence under section 53(3) of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 for any person to pass as genuine any copy or reproduction of this extract which has not been made by a district registrar or assistant registrar and authenticated by his signature.

Any person who falsifies or forges any of the particulars on this extract or knowingly uses, gives or sends as genuine any false or forged extract is liable to prosecution under section 53(1) of the said Act.

XD3 (R)

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