

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Today there is often reflection on the loss of community spirit. Towns have grown quickly and it is considered that people have changed. There is a feeling of selfishness and ones abounding. Prestonpans is one of those towns where once everyone knew their neighbour and there was no shortage of hands when a family moved home or another child was born.

“Aye, I remember when the streets thronged on Gala Day”, the older members of the community are heard to lament. Reminiscences of children competing in the sack or egg and spoon races abound, and of how the Gala Day parade was much longer than four floats! It was a family time, when mums and dads, and grans and granddads were prominent in the fun, and skint knees weren’t just bragged about by the children four weeks later.

Young children were referred to as “cheeky wee monkeys” when they played chap-door-run, or ran into a garden to retrieve a ball. Now, after taking a second thought, the young ones may only very reluctantly be chased from mischief, as their response to remonstrations could be a tirade of abuse. They are now referred to as “little vandals” and cries of “it’s the parents’ fault” are heard from all quarters.

There is no doubt that life is changing but in Prestonpans the community spirit is breathing. This spirit has helped my family through tough times and it still helps me today. It can come in the form of a friendly greeting or a smile and “good morning”. Occasionally a pair of outstretched arms is offered in a gesture of comfort.

Neighbours still take in the washing when it rains or the bin when it’s emptied. I’ve even come home from work to find the fence has been creosoted or the hedge trimmed for me. Yes, the community spirit still dwells in Prestonpans and, with the help of projects like those being encouraged by the Prestoungrange Gothenburg Arts Festival, the Council and other groups and volunteers, it will remain a community and I shall always be proud to be a “Panner”.

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