

Largo, Glasgow Fair, 1954

Jack loved his holidays in Largo, his main chance each year to relax away from work, to escape from the grind of daily life and his job as a joiner. There were five of them now in the single end, claustrophobic, just like being back in the Subs.

Jack (Uncle Jock) was a great swimmer. It was a calm day, bright and sunny. He swam out from the shore and just kept swimming, more than a mile out in the Firth of Forth. When the kids couldn't see him from the shore they were worried. The North Sea was always cold and feeling chilled, Jack turned back, using the hump of Largo Law as his guide.

His brother William (usually called Wullie or to the kids, Uncle Bonnie) and sisters Margaret and Lottie were here too with their families, for the Glasgow Fair holiday week; fourteen kids, all primary school age.

The kids were waving and shouting to Uncle Jock as he climbed out onto a flattish rock a hundred yards out. He and waved to them then lay down to sunbathe and, it seemed, Uncle Jock fell asleep.

A while later they noticed that the tide was coming in and the kids started to worry about him again, shouting louder, screaming, egged on by Uncle Bonnie.

'Uncle Jock, the tide's coming in! The tide's coming in! Wake up, Uncle Jock, you're going to drown. Wake up Uncle Jock, the tide's coming in!'

Jock pretended to sleep on. Noisily, bossily, pretending to be worried, Uncle Bonnie organised a 'Rescue Party'. The kids would have to wade out with and because Uncle Jock was Johnny's Dad, he must lead them.

Johnny, aged seven, still had twenty yards to go to reach the rock where his father lay. The water was up to his chin. The kids screamed at the top of their voices.

Jock stood up, 'stumbled' and with a loud cry of **"Help!"** fell backwards into the water on the far side of the rock and immediately began swimming underwater.

Uncle Bonnie shouted:

'Get Uncle Jock, he's drowning. Get him kids, he's drowning!'

Then Uncle Bonnie shouted:

'Look out kids, there's a big fish in the water. It is a shark. Just leave Uncle Jock. Look, the shark's going for him! LEAVE HIM! Save yourselves!'

The kids turned and splashed their way back towards the shore.

Largo, Glasgow Fair, 1954

All except Johnny.

Even though Johnny couldn't swim, even though he was really scared, Johnny had to try to save his Dad. He waded deeper. The salty water lapped into his mouth.

Suddenly he felt strong hands grab him round his waist and lift him right out of the water.

'Gotchya Johnny!'

Jack lifted Johnny up onto his shoulders and waded back to the shore.