

The Gillies brothers outside Wull's cottage at Upper Todhills, Tealing.



Left to right: George (71), James (78) and wife Margaret, and Wull (74)

The Dundee Journal has been sent to Jim in Canada for 66 years.

It was hard going down on Jim's farm He killed 54 wolves in one winter.

James Gillies 79 on Sunday is home in his native Angus for the first time since 1918. As if ever a man should see changes Believe it or not he doesn't see that many.

But then Jim is a country lad and the countryside around Tealing to Lumley Den is much the same as when he left it.

His father was a gamekeeper with Fotheringham of Lumley Den when 12 year old Jim emigrated to Canada to work on an uncles farm at Selkirk near Winnipeg and long hours of hard work it was with seven months winter.

At 21 he joined the Winnipeg police but this proved to be no picnic either. One midnight outside business premises he spotted two shadowy figures. The year previously a policeman had been shot dead there. Jim drew his revolver and crept up... surprised and arrested them. Dangerous characters? Well, one got 23 years and the other was deported back to Italy, Jim was commended.

In 1916 he enlisted in the Canadian Army Service corps and saw action at Cambrai, Arras, Vimy, and Mons. Two years later he paid what was his last visit to Scotland for 54 years.

He married Canadian born Margaret (her people had emigrated from Lancashire) in 1935. They had been friends since her school days.

For 15 years Jim worked as an attendant in a mental Hospital, returning to his uncle's farm, which he inherited. 450 acres - managed by Margaret and himself.

In the long hard winters there was wood to be sawn and chopped, the stock to be fed and looked after – and predators to be guarded against.

Bears? Not always a menace- Jim once raised an orphan brown bear as a pet, but there had been a worse menace – wolves! With the aid of a couple of stag hounds he accounted for 54 one winter.

Back in Lumley Den in 1925 his younger brother George wanted to join him in Canada, but his father persuaded him to stay at home. Later George married Nellie from Errol and went to live in Kent then Essex where he was a shepherd.

Another brother Joe, emigrated to Australia in 1910 without any of them seeing him again.

There host is another brother. Wull, at his little cottage augmented by a caravan around the back at upper Todhills, Tealing.

Wull was a Dundee Bobby, retired a good 20 years. What stuck in his mind about the life? Surprisingly, point duty – he still vividly remembers the hours spent in freezing winter

What strikes Jim's wife Margaret about Scotland? The cold! After the Canadian winters?

If it is a dry cold there here she finds it surprisingly damp. Oh – and the hills. Their part of Canada is surprisingly flat.

With Margaret's help Jim still looks after the farm.

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