Professor Alexander Fenton adds to this note:

'When I was at school in Auchterless, not far from Keith, in the late 1930s-40s, one of my fellow scholars would occasionally write on the blackboard:

Beef brose an bannock day
Please gie's a holiday.'

So *beef* brose it was.

MARGARET BENNETT

Carryanchor Night

The following Burghead custom was described by two Morayshire women, Mrs Marne Neillie and Mrs Doreen Shepherd, who have lived in Edinburgh for many years. They were recorded by Margaret Bennett and Emily Lyle who initially made contact in order to interview them about the better-known custom of the burning of the clavie (see Shepherd *et al*: 1992). Amy Stewart Fraser, who included a mention of the carryanchor custom (citing Doreen Shepherd) in *Dae Ye Min' Langsyne* (1975: 177), was incorrect in placing it on the night before Hogmanay as Mrs Shepherd informed us.

Marne Neillie: A few days before Hallowe'en the young people of the village went to the beach and collected a piece of seaweed. You know the long piece of seaweed that looks like a club with the fronds on the end of it? The fronds were taken off and the carryanchor . . . that is the carryanchor. This piece of seaweed was brought home and dried off. Very often in your mother's oven, if she allowed it. Well of course there was no gas or electricity at this time so it was an easy thing just to open the oven and slip it in without anybody noticing. And by the night before Hallowe'en they were very dry and very hard, and we used to run around the doors just banging on the doors to warn people that the next night was Hallowe'en and we would be round. But there was never any singing or rhyme or anything like that. We just banged on the doors. And most of the people didn't renew their doors, the painting on their doors, until after Carryanchor Night, because they knew that if it was newly painted and they got a bang on it they would have to do it again . . .

Doreen Shepherd: Also that night before Hallowe'en people knew that you would be round. And if someone had had their door painted, and they were canny folk, somebody

would be behind the door. And as you came along they had a bucket of water and let fly at you. I remember one old 'meanie' she was, was known to do that every year, but we just learned to keep away from here. And there was another, a strange woman . . . It was said that people—that fishermen—didn't like to meet her on their way to the harbour because she had an evil eye. Somehow or other we children knew there was something odd about her. Do you remember that year? The house stood with another on a bit of green. On its own so that you could go right round it. So we took it in turn to bang her door and run round the back and then, of course, she came to the door and nearly caught us. We took to our heels like grim death and away down the road. We never did it again because I suppose we were frightened of her. There was an element of fear in that. I don't know any other village along the south side of the Moray Firth that had that custom of Carryanchor at all . . .

D.S.: In Elgin they went round the shops shouting 'Eelie-o-lo-lo gie's nuts'.

Emily Lyle: Did you meet people from Elgin that told you this?

D.S.: We went to Elgin Academy for our secondary education and our friends there told us about what they did on Hallowe'en.

M.N.: And by the time that we were ready to catch a bus the younger children were already out shouting 'Eelie-o-lo-lo gie's nuts'. But that must have been on Hallowe'en itself.

D.S.: Yes, that was actually Hallowe'en night. They didn't know anything about Carryanchor at all, the Elgin people . . .

E.L.: On the Carryanchor Night, how many of you went out together?

D.S.: A whole lot of us. In fact there were about eight of us, all of us the same age. And about the same time of schooling. As we got older we went around a lot together. Yes, six to eight it was.

E.L.: And did you all have a—what did you call it?—this thing you had in your hand?

D.S.: We called it 'carryanchor'. The actual object was a carryanchor.

Margaret Bennett: Did you knock with it or did you knock with your hands?

D.S.: You banged with it. A good wallop on the door. And then ran for your life.

M.N.: As a matter of fact, it's been known to have a door split. You know these doors that are in four panels? The boys, you see, would give it a good bang. And if it was one of those thin plywood things it would easily split down. It's been known.

D.S.: It was tolerated wonderfully well really.

M.N.: I suppose because our parents did it too in their day. . . .

D.S.: It was just making a good crack on the door.

M.N.: It wasn't vandalism.

E.L.: If you were inside the house, just sitting there by the fire—

D.S.: They knew what it was and you just said, 'Ach, that's another lot past'.

M.N.: And it didn't go on for very long.

D.S.: No, the early part of the evening.

M.N.: The early evening and then it was time for us to go home and get to bed. At least to be inside.

(School of Scottish Studies Archive, SA 1985/136, 191).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to the late Bill Salton for transcribing the tape.

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MARGARET BENNETT AND EMILY LYLE

'It Sits Heich, It Cries Sair'

'Perhaps there were a couple of riddles that I remember . . .

To ma riddle, to ma riddle, to ma rot, tot, tot,
I met a man in a reid, reid coat,
A staff in his hand and a stane in his throat,
To ma riddle, to ma riddle, to ma rot, tot, tot.

And the answer to that was a cherry. And another one I remember was:

It sits heich, it cries sair,
It hes the heid but it wants the hair.

And that was a rooster'
(School of Scottish Studies Archive, SA 1976/256 A4-5)

When I recorded these two riddles from Alec Smith in Sydney (derived ultimately from his native Buckie), both the answers he gave seemed satisfying. It was only recently that I realised, through reading Stewart Sanderson's note 'Two Scottish Riddles', that the answer to the second riddle is an unusual one; in all the cases quoted by Sanderson the answer given is 'bell' or (once) 'townclock'. However, the riddle has been judged unsatisfactory when taken with these answers. Archer Taylor observes in his head-note to nos. 3-4 'Head, No Hair' in *English*