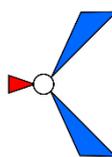


1455 BC

bncdoc.id	BN3
bncdoc.author	Caplan, Jack
bncdoc.year	1991
bncdoc.title	Memories of the Gorbals.
bncdoc.info	Memories of the Gorbals. Sample containing about 34758 words from a book (domain: world affairs)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_biography

<p><1455/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>or Lodge, whose founder was an Ethel Mitchell; and a committee-member of many another local organisation. She gave much of her time and energy to everything in which she became involved. She was a hard worker, a loyal comrade, a good conversationalist, ever striving to climb higher on the social ladder, and always a loyal and devoted wife. Mary served behind the counter at Bacon's for a few hours per week. It made a welcome change from household chores and got her into contact with customers which provided a little gossip. This in turn kept her in touch with local happenings - who was doing what, to whom, etc. And the few shillings earned was more than welcome in those hard days. Simon worked as a tailor's presser, not a highly-paid job. So, the little money from the shop, plus about ten more shillings for part-time secretarial work, helped in augmenting her husband's small income. From tiny acorns, mighty oaks grow. Likewise, from small, insignificant incidents, a tragedy can emerge. And this was to be poor Mary's destiny. Ethel Mitchell and her ladies were having a function, a dinner-dance, the highlight of their social calendar. As I understand it, Mary was a committee-member, entertainment section. On her shoulders, therefore, was placed a fair measure of responsibility. This she coped with admirably, having a flair for such activities. The rock on which she perished is now looming. My mother helped in making a lovely evening dress. Etty provided the latest style in stockings, and perhaps an odd item of cheap jewellery. But what Mary wished to have, in keeping with what the other ladies wore, was a ring of such quality that it would draw looks of admiration ... such as a dazzling diamond ring. None of the females in the family could help in that direction; we were too poor for such richness. Mary, with her usual sense of urgency, concentrated on the need to be 'well-dressed'. She called on friends, far and wide, in her search for a ring of high quality, but with no success. She travelled full circle, around Glasgow. Then she found herself at Lodge offices, where Ethel Mitchell was still working. And to the good lady Mary explained her quest ... her hope to attend the dinner fully equipped. Bingo! 'I'll lend you this, Mary, if it fits your finger.' And so it was that Mary had managed to borrow one of the most expensive 'sparklers' the Gorbals had ever seen. Our Mary was then Cinderella until</p> <hr/> <p>the evening of the function</p> <p>. Or rather the mid-evening of that fateful night. The crème de la crème of Glasgow society generally and Gorbald notables in particular were present. One of the city's best orchestras was in attendance. As dinner was being served, Chopin's nocturnes and polonaises were included as a tasteful background to incessant, and sometimes inane, chatter. Mary was so happy. Everything had gone better than expectation. The City Hall reverberated with gaiety and laughter, delightful music, wonderful food, and so many lovely and friendly people. Her euphoria had been considerably aided and abetted by the intake of some gin and orange drinks and a cocktail or two given freely to those selected few responsible for the organising of such a grand evening.</p>
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	<p>She excused herself when halfway through the meal, and made for the ladies room. A feeling of nausea had suddenly come over her. The drink, the heat, and perhaps, too, the tension of the evening necessitated a visit to the toilet. There, she vomited. After a while, when the sickness had passed, she went to the wash-hand basin to wash and freshen-up, then returned to her seat at the dinner table. It is not known for certain at what moment of time afterwards she looked at her fingers, in order to gaze admiringly at the ring. This is not important. But when she did - she petrified in horror. The beautiful diamond ring had gone. It took her several minutes to shake off the resulting stupefaction. Then, and only then, was it realised she had taken it off when she had washed her hands. She raced back to the toilet, went directly to the wash-hand basin used by her ... it had gone! She searched everywhere. Other ladies joined in the search, but it was a waste of their time. It was too big to have fallen down the plug-hole, or so it was reckoned. She collapsed. The world had fallen on her. I was told that the ring was valued at approximately £100. In terms of value, roughly, that sum in the 1930s was equal to around £1500 in today's money. This was a loss of the greatest magnitude. For Mary it resulted not only in domestic upheaval, leading to the beginning of the break-up of her marriage, but to her early death. In order to pay back, to compensate Ethel Mitchell, she had put herself up to her neck in debt. She borrowed money from friends, from a money-lender (a dangerous practice at any time) and also from, I think, Mr Bacon. The poor woman had a nervous breakdown</p>
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