

9<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Kiss

**“When age chills the blood, when our pleasures are past –  
For years fleet away with the wings of the dove –  
The dearest remembrance will still be the last,  
Our sweetest memorial the first kiss of love.”**

*Lord Byron, The First Kiss of Love*

The village of Corpach lies a few miles from Fort William at the beginning of the “Road to the Isles”, north-west to Mallaig and beyond. The Canal Lock at the Corpach Basin is the western entrance to the Caledonian Canal. “Corpach” is thought by some scholars to be based on the Gaelic for “field of corpses”, as it was reputed to be a resting place when coffins of chieftains were taken to be buried on the Isle of Iona. There was a battle in Corpach in 1470, when the Camerons routed the MacLeans.

World War I saw a US naval base in Corpach as part of the laying of the “North Sea Mine Barrage”, with naval mines being shipped into Corpach from the US before being sent across country to Inverness via the Caledonian Canal. During World War II, Corpach was the engineering base of HMS *St Christopher*, a training base for Royal Navy Coastal Forces. There was a camp close by at Annat, which became a village of Prefab homes for families returning to the area after the war. That’s the village where I was born. I was baptised in Kilmallie church in Corpach. I had my first Saturday job as a petrol-pump-attendant at the Corpach Hotel.

But, important though all of this might be, it fades into insignificance against *this* fact about Corpach – I had my first serious kiss after a dance in the Corpach Village Hall. I won’t name the young lady, or the event, or the aftermath, in order to protect the innocent – mostly me! But I could take you to the spot, and I could recount every moment of the wonder and the joy of it. At the age of fifteen, that kiss changed my life. How? You work it out! You’ve been there! You know just what I mean! For, in a happy memory, you might be in your *own* special place – right now!

Byron’s words say it best. The memory of that kiss brings warmth to my heart today. It is “the sweetest memorial” to my dearest remembrance, in the village of Corpach, of “the first kiss of love.”

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, as the “years fleet away”, I’m thankful that  
the pleasures of your love will never fade. Amen*