

Newsletter #1

NEW BABY TRADITIONS

The Living Memory Association uses reminiscence and memory to bring people together. This is more important now than ever. Our Wee Museum of Memory at Ocean Terminal is currently closed but that doesn't mean we can't keep connected through sharing memories. We hope you enjoy our first Newsletter. Many of the memories have been taken from comments that have been sent in recently. Please do send us your memories if you can, for inclusion in future issues and to be added to our archive.

As a welcome to our first newsletter; a baptism picture! The baby was Morris Knight, son of Sarah Knight née Weddell, and the picture was taken in West Saville Terrace in Edinburgh in 1958. The christening shawl, a work of art, was made of cashmere. Does anyone remember the tradition of the parents walking to church for the christening with the baby in its pram and giving a gift for luck to someone they meet on the way? Usually it was a piece of cake and a coin and if the baby was a girl, the gift was given to a man. If the baby was a boy, it was given to a woman.

I as a 12 year old was the recipient of a christening piece. I was coming out the local paper shop with the Sunday papers and was given a paper bag with cake and half a crown in it from the christening party on their way to church. The family were connected to Bobby Blackwood that played for Hearts.'

[Liz Sproat](#)



'I married in my Parish Church and was an attender all my young life yet my church would not christen my child because neither my other half or I were Church members. Although he was christened and I was not... This was 1965. Christening is a Holy Sacrament and you don't qualify if you were not a member way back by Church of Scotland rules.'

[Anonymous](#)

'I remember the first time you 'met' a new baby you tucked a coin in the pram.'

[Meg Wallace](#)



‘The christening shawl my mum made for my daughters. She kept the pattern and gave it to me but this is beyond my abilities as a knitter!’ (Maureen Liddell)

A handsel is ‘a gift bestowed to commemorate an inaugural occasion, event or season, e.g. the beginning of the year, the first visit to a friend’s new home or the commencement of a new undertaking, the wearing of new clothes, etc., with the idea of bringing good luck to the recipient.’ (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*). With this ritual wee ones are given best wishes for their start in life.

‘Yes and we did it for our kids. One in Gorgie and two in Zimbabwe. We used a Christening shawl made specially for my eldest by his great grandmother who, due to cataract, was almost blind. She had given up knitting but started again when we gave her the news a baby was on the way.’

[Bertha Henretty](#)

‘I still put money in the pram when I meet a new baby for the first time. When I took my older daughter to my mum’s house for the first time, my sister took her out in the pram. It was the day of the First Communions in the village and she visited a few of the family celebrations and came back with a lot of money in the pram!’

‘I remember this custom [putting coins in the pram] in Lanarkshire and did the same when my girls were being christened but we gave the “Christening Piece” to a child of the opposite sex.’

[Maureen Liddell](#)

‘This was done in Leith. My baby brother was carried to his christening in South Leith, and the Christening piece was given to the first girl, a half-crown and two tea biscuits buttered, and wrapped in grease-proof paper. My mother always put a silver coin under a baby’s pillow, a handsel, blessed both giver and baby.’

[Christine Muir](#)

‘I had a christening piece ready when we walked to church with my son in 1969. The first female we met was an old lady just off Easter Road and she was very happy to take it, Cake and 2/6.’

[Margaret Wood](#) ■

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THE LIVING MEMORY ASSOCIATION, NEWSLETTER, FIRST ISSUE

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Do you have memories, stories or photos you'd like to share?

We would love it if you had time to write them down below and send them back to us.

Name:

Contact details:

Please tick if you wish to receive the next issues of our newsletter.

Your memories :