

Hamish McHaggis

and the Aberlady Gala Mystery

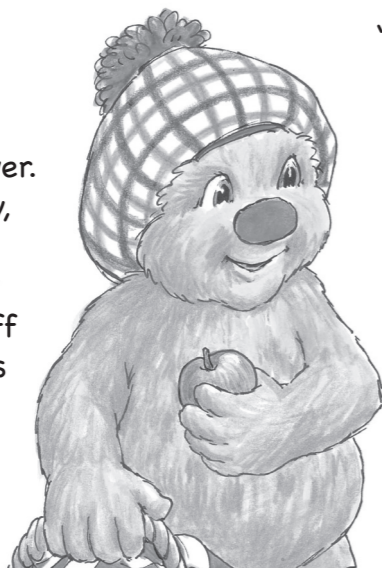
by Linda Strachan

Abigail and Poppy, two wee tabby cats who live in Aberlady, sent a postcard to Hamish McHaggis inviting him and his friends to come to the Gala Day. Hamish was looking forward to it and when they arrived the village was decorated with brightly coloured bunting and there was excitement in the air as everyone prepared for big day.

He lifted his picnic basket out of the back of the Whirry Bang because he was feeling a little hungry and took out a cheese sandwich. It was tasty, but when he looked around to see if anyone else wanted one, he couldn't see his friends. Angus, the pine marten and Rupert, the hedgehog, had been right beside the Whirry Bang just a few moments before, but they had disappeared.

"Angus! Rupert! Where are you?" he called, but there was no answer. He could see Jeannie, the osprey, flying high over Aberlady church but he didn't think she would be able to hear him. Jeannie was off to say hello to some of the birds she knew who lived across the bay in the bird sanctuary.

Hamish walked along the road to the kirk stables where he



found his friends, the two tabby cats. He asked them if they had seen Angus and Rupert.

"We've not seen them," Abigail told him.

"Perhaps they're in the community hall?" Poppy said, but when they got there there was no sign of them.

Not far away, on the playing fields beside the school, Angus and Rupert were with Ruaridh, a wee squirrel, who was looking very worried and hugging his bushy tail.

"It's the Gala crown," Ruaridh explained.

"It's gone missing and I was supposed to be looking after it!"

"Oh dear!" Angus looked at Rupert.

"We can help Ruaridh look for it!"

"Yes, of course we can. Where was it before it got lost?"

Ruaridh looked embarrassed. "I just wanted to see it sparkle in the sunshine, so I took it outside. That was when I noticed some lovely looking nuts and I just had to go and have a nibble of them. I put it down beside this fence, but when I got back I couldn't see it anywhere."

"Hmm." Rupert was deep in thought when he heard Hamish calling them.

"I've been looking everywhere for you two!"

Angus told him about the missing crown and they all started searching for it. After a while Hamish sat down and opened his picnic basket. "I need a little snack. Would you like something Ruaridh?" They were enjoying their picnic and wondering where else they could look, when Jeannie flew down to join them. She was keen to help and soon Abigail and Poppy joined in the search, but there was still no sign of the crown and it was getting late. Everyone was busy preparing the floats and setting up everything for the Gala Day.

"Oh dear," Jeannie was quite upset. "What if we can't find the crown?"

Just then a flash of black and white flew past her. It was Ben, the magpie, flying back to his nest with a string of shiny ribbon in his beak. Jeannie flapped her wings in excitement. "I think I might know where the crown has gone!"

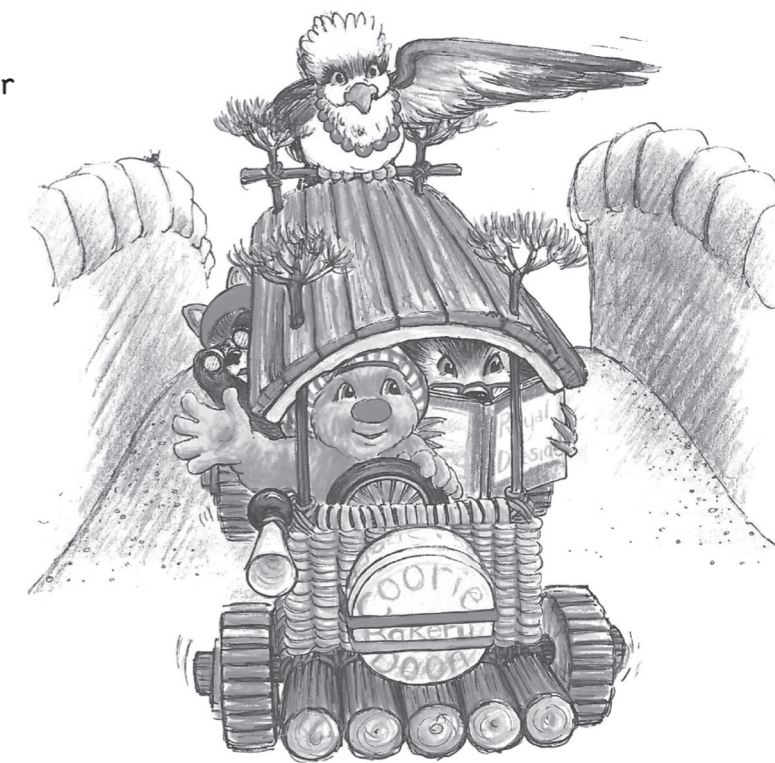
A moment later Jeannie and Ben flew back, carrying the crown between them. They landed and put it down in front of Ruaridh. Everyone was delighted they had found it.

"I am sorry," Ben told them. "I didn't know it was the Gala Day crown. It was so beautiful I wanted to use it to decorate my nest."

Ruaridh and Ben, Poppy and Abigail took the crown to the stage where the Gala Day queen was to be crowned. Hamish told Rupert, Jeannie and Angus they'd better hurry and decorate the Whirry Bang. It was going to be part of the Gala Day Parade and it was nearly time for the parade to start.

Soon the Whirry Bang was ready and they joined in the parade as the decorated tractors started up their engines and gently drove off pulling the cavalcade of floats, each one beautifully decorated. It was a braw sight

with all the amazing displays. As the pipers played and the floats went by, Abigail and Poppy, Ruaridh and Ben waved and cheered, but they had a special cheer for their friends in the Whirry Bang.



After the parade Hamish McHaggis and all his friends gathered to watch Emma, the Gala Day Queen being crowned, with Tommy, her Consort by her side. All the Primary 1 and Primary 7 children were on the stage, the girls in their white dresses and the boys in their kilts.

It was a wonderful day with so much to see and do. There was music, a bouncy castle, a magician, pony rides and after a busy afternoon the friends all settled down in the Tea Tent for juice and cakes. As the Whirry Bang set off back to Coorie Doon, they all agreed they'd had a lot of fun at the Aberlady Gala.

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