Copyright © April 2012, September 2018

The Origin of the Chucken

Contents

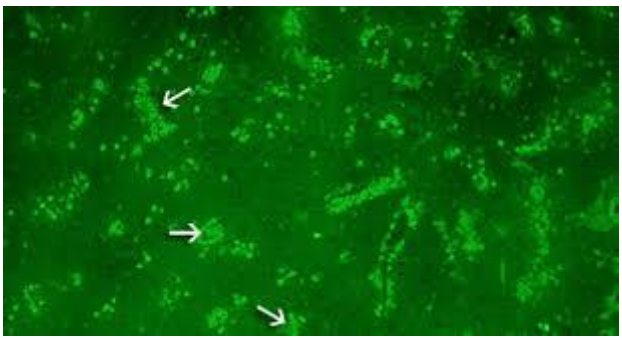
A Preamble on Origins....2
The Scottish Chronicles....3
The Settlement of Malcolm....4
The Beginnings of Things....6
The Vanishment of Napoleon....7
The Joppa Triangle....8
The Emperor's Return....9
Naming the Newcomers....11
Name 1....11
Name 2....12
Name 3....14
The Joppanese People....15
Napoleon and his Family....18
Napoleon....18
Henrietta....18
Caesar....19
Camelo....19
The Origin of the Joppanese Chickens....21

A Preamble on Origins

Dear Reader, if I may mimic and paraphrase the rhetorical mantra of an erstwhile, secretly Scottish, politician, the reason all creatures exist – including humans - in all our present and diverse forms is down to Evolution, Evolution, Evolution!

Where would we be without it? Imagine no change-up, ever! The vast assortments and variations in the compendium of life would be reduced to single-celled amoebae's swimming around like sightless, aimless dodgem cars in a bio-stagnant, primordial gene-pool, no doubt.

<pic of amoebas swimming >



But evolution is our graduating metamorphosis. All living creatures are mutations, procreated out of - and directly derived - from proto-incarnations.

<pic of Darwin shaking hands with Alfred Russell Wallace>



The subject matter of our story goes beyond and, in part, transcends the narratives of natural historians and evolutionary theorists who tell us that the humble chicken or domestic fowl (gallus, gallus domesticus) is directly descended from the Red Junglefowl and, it seems, the Grey Junglefowl; both of which originated in Asia Minor (including India and China).

<pics of Red and Grey Junglefowl>





We are going to set aside the orthodoxy and dry taxonomic chronological and biological threads of accepted and normalised scientific thought and embark on a fun-filled wonderful adventure. We will explore a much more fanciful and magical fable, where legend asserts an alternative history to the origin of certain types of chicken – specifically the Scottish Joppanese chicken (gallus, gallus, nippy Scotus).

The Scottish Chronicles

The first references to the Joppanese Chicken are contained in the Scottish Chronicles, which recount the adventures and exploits of Muchtie Malcolm MacMurdoch. The chronicles have been handed down through the ages as legends; as golden threads of oral folk myth and tradition; regenerated round campfires by parents to their children; and through the visions and reveries of Scottish wisemen and seers.

I have the very humble and honoured privilege of being able to relate these stories to you, based on the notes I transcribed out of several discussions with the great Scottish Seer, Big Jessie – a West Coast Scot, who is part-man and part-woman.



<pic of Big Jessie>

The Settlement of Malcolm

The main themes and events recorded in the chronicles revolve around Malcolm MacMurdoch, a noble and wise Scottish Chieftain, who lived near Dun Eideann (ancient Gaelic name for Edinburgh), in a fishing port in East Central Scotland, called Joppa, which we now recognise individually as the suburban districts of Portobello and Joppa, and the old fishing town of Musselburgh.



Malcolm's clan originated in the Hebrides, part of the Western Isles, and from Ayrshire, on the West Coast of Scotland. Malcolm was a keen mariner, like all his kin. When returning from one of his frequent deep-sea voyages, instead of continuing up the West Coast, past England and Wales, to his home territories on Scotland's Western Kingdom, he had an impulse for intrigue and adventure and ordered the fleet to take a right turn into the English Channel and then left to follow the East Coast of the British Isles. He found his choice of route to be much straighter but with rougher conditions in the colder waters of the North Sea. The journey took several days and passed without incident but as they sailed up from the Scottish Borders, he was impressed by the beauty of the bays and beaches as he sailed past. He was probably admiring the natural coastal beauty spots that stretch from what we know now as Belhaven Bay through to North Berwick and Portobello.

< ancient map of Portobello, Joppa and Musselburgh>



When Malcolm arrived at Joppa, he could see a lot of activity and industrial bustle on and off the shoreline, so he decided to drop anchor and take the opportunity to replenish his provisions. The break from travelling would also give his company the opportunity for some rest and recreation; providing the locals were friendly souls. Malcolm was accompanied by his family, close kinsmen, a small band of loyal warriors and the sailing crew from his three ships.

The locals couldn't have been more welcome. The bay and its surroundings turned out to be a thriving and lively fishing community and they were well used to traders and travellers coming and going. After only one week on shore, the head men and woman in Malcolm's company came to him and petitioned for them to make settlement here. They loved the beautiful harbour, scenery and beach so much that they were resolved to settle there and establish the diverse, vibrant community in Joppa as their new home.

Malcolm sensed the resolute desires of his people and, without saying so, he shared their wish to stay there in equal measure. But he was their Leader: he had to be sure it was safe; that the natural resources and industry in the area could sustain them and bring prosperity in the long term; he also had to take account of the current incumbent population and be satisfied that they were disposed to not only grant their request, but also wanted them to stay.

It was clear from his short stay that the native community lacked any meaningful leadership. Sure, they had local village leaders and spokesmen, clergymen, druids, innkeepers, wise-women, busy-bodies and the usual parcels of rogues and vagabonds, but there was no pre-eminent chieftain; either hereditary – their clanship structure wasn't as strong here as in the West and North of Scotland – or through natural ability. They didn't have any recognised scholars or nobility and they didn't have a ruling warrior sect.

Nonetheless, Malcolm wanted – and insisted – that the decision to allow his people to settle there was a people's choice for the sitting inhabitants. He knew he could force his will on these people – both physically - by the brute force of his warriors - and personally. Malcolm was a very commanding figure: tall and muscular in stature; well-educated in sciences and arts; worldly-wise through his travels; articulate and rhetorically adept. But Malcolm was a committed egalitarian - a first among equals perhaps, but always an equal to good-minded people.

He asked the village leaders to gather all the adults in the community for a meeting in the Village Square and put the acceptance of Malcolm and his company into the community to a vote, by show of hands. Thankfully – and with much relief all round – the result was a resounding yes.

The Beginnings of Things

Malcolm and his people settled in very quickly into the Joppa community and integrated very well, with marriages, business partnerships, alliances and friendships enriching the social and economic fabric and welfare of the conjoined people. The role of de facto leader of Joppa and its larger surrounds came naturally to him and his counselling and judgemental skills were in great demand. He refused, however, to take on the formal role of Laird and Sheriff; although all tacitly viewed him as such.

Malcolm wasn't a homeboy though; he was a seasoned salt; a skilled mariner; an explorer and adventurer if the high seas. After a couple of years on land, his innate impulse to wander would nag at him so incessantly that he could no longer suppress it and he would make sail, with the outings getting a longer and more frequent. Over the next few years, an itinerant pattern began to develop, where Malcolm would come home from one of his roamings and settle for a few months, then, on short notice, he would stock and rig his ship and/or ships and set sail on another adventure.

Our story of the Origin of the Chicken begins with one such voyage that Malcolm took to visit his cousin, the King of Iceland, whose name was Nanook Poleoneuk. After a few weeks stay with his cousin, Malcolm decided it was time to sail home. Upon his departure, Nanook gifted him with a baby emperor walrus as a pet and Malcolm affectionately named him Napoleon – a contraction of his cousin's name (Na- + Poleon-) - in gratitude for such a wonderful present.

<pic of Napoleon as a baby>



The voyage back to Scotland from Iceland took several weeks to complete, and Malcolm, after noticing how bright and responsive Napoleon was to his voice and commands to action, spent many hours and days teaching Napoleon a basic sign language. Napoleon was a star pupil and mastered the signs very quickly, using his flippers to spell out words and to communicate semaphore-style messages.

The sight of Napoleon lolloping along at the side of Malcolm when they arrived back on shore evoked a supercilious ripple amongst some of the locals; especially the fishwives with their dry, laconic wit and razor-shell tongues (and their keen appetite for walrus meat). Thankfully, the community grew accustomed to seeing Malcolm and his seadog taking their constitutional walks and watching their game-playing antics.

Malcolm loved that walrus above all else, and for four years they played and frolicked every day they could by the seaside at Portobello beach.
<Malcolm and Napoleon on portobello beach>

The Vanishment of Napoleon

One warm and sunny morning, Malcolm and Napoleon went down to Portobello beach as usual for a swim.

The water was calm, warm and clear; so lovely to swim in.

As they capered about in the shallows, Napoleon began edging further and further out of the bay and into deeper waters. Billowing waves started to form and the sea became choppy. Malcolm looked up and saw the gathering storm. He called out to Napoleon to be careful, but his caution wasn't heeded; perhaps it wasn't heard, due to the distance between them and the thudding noise of the rocking clearwater.

Suddenly, the cloud bank completely blanketed the water surface where Napoleon was swimming and he vanished from sight; only to reappear some 100+ meters further out.

The clouds became thicker; bedarkening the sky from the heavens to the horizon.

A massive vortex of swirling cloud and water suddenly appeared.

The clouds in the centre of the sky had spiked down into the water, creating a frenzied spout shooting up from the water to the sky.

<pic of the Joppa Triangle and storm>





It was done and gone in an instant; nothing left; no storm, no clouds, no vortex; and no Napoleon.

Malcolm stared in ironic horror at the beautiful blue sky and lolloping sea that had first attracted them in for a swim and that had now just claimed the life, it seemed, of his best buddy.

He sat and wept on the sandy beach for hours; nursing his grief; his memory of the calamitous event a last precious vestige of his old friend and dearest companion.

This was the first time Malcolm had witnessed the Joppa Triangle. He'd heard about it; - from the whispers of eccentric old men and laconic fish-wives. But to see it in all its terrible might so ruthlessly destroy Napoleon and send him to a watery grave overwhelmed him.
<pic of Malcolm in Grief on the beach>

The Joppa Triangle

For the next eleven years, Malcolm researched and studied everything he could find on the Joppa Triangle and similar paranormal natural phenomena (they didn't know about the Bermuda Triangle in those pre-Columbian days).

Malcolm also became very interested in Thaumaturgy – sophisticated magic – and spoke to Druids and Seers about the (magic) art of the possible, however improbable, and the mechanisms, elements and incantations that controlled the nebulous eldritch world of the "other places".





<pics of druids etc>

Gradually, Malcolm drew together a substantial body of knowledge on the composition, behaviours, mechanisms and management controls – such as there was – of the Triangle.

Oh man! It was complex, mysterious, powerful, transcendental, mind-boggling, science-baffling, myth-enhancing stuff; and he loved it; completely absorbed, fascinated and enthralled by its potency and esoteric dangers.

Malcolm learned that the Portal could be encouraged to appear at specific locations and during specific phases of the eleven-year solar cycle, by means of a photonic catalyst, made from combining the Adder Stone with a smoky quartz gemstone and infusing them with a narrow band of intense light.

For the device to work, the gem must be sited and fixed firmly within the centre of the Adder stone, which is normally hollow. The device is flooded with concentrated sunlight, that is prismed, refracted and reflected within the gemstone until only violet light remains. This is then focused directly back at the sun at a precise time and location, until the portal appears.

The Emperor's Return

Malcolm was ready. He'd had 7 years of research and 4 years of preparation just to be ready for this day.

It had to work; it had to!

One of the conditions for promoting success in opening the portal was to place the Portal Rod as high as possible and at an inclination of 23° N, to compensate for the Earth's declination position in mid-Summer in the Northern Hemisphere; the Druids were clever and wise people who had an in-depth knowledge of the stars and the Sun and Earth's relative positions in the heavens.

There was an extinct volcano, not far from Portobello beach called Ard-na-Said (we now know it as Arthurs Seat). Malcolm decided that this site was their best option and the group proceeded to set up camp there overnight, in readiness for the dawn deliverance and the return of Napoleon. He couldn't sleep that night; hoping and praying that Napoleon was still alive. Will he recognise him? Will he want to come back? Oh, the curse of waiting!

Two hours before Dawn, Malcolm and his friends got to work.

The Portal Catalyst was placed carefully into position and everything was checked by the Druids to ensure the spatial interface between the Catalyst and the Sun would be exactly right when Dawn came; then they waited.





<pic of pre-Dawn>
What a glorious world we live in, mused Malcolm as they waited. The colours and blends of visible light emerging from the crescent horizon, as the majestic heavenly colossus rose from the depths of darkness and caressed the world in its imperious embrace.

Physics did the rest.

The Catalyst amplified and stimulated the sunlight; tapering the spatial and electro-magnetic bandwidth of beam in an instant and sending out a narrow, concentrated burst of pure violet light out of Quartz stone and directly back at the centre of the Sun; it was beautiful to watch; and awesome.

Several minutes went by; the feeling amongst the camp was sweaty and tense. Incrementally, the sky began to vibrate and pulse; and then, they witnessed a miracle.

A beautifully clear azure window appeared in the sky; just above the horizon. It was a brilliant saltire-blue, shimmering like a desert mirage in the skyline. Slowly, the outlines of four figures could be made out, emerging from the heavens like beatific saints. Then all at once the window closed and four "objects" fell out of the portal and into the sea. Everything was back to "normal" except for the four emergents; what were they?





Without a word, Malcom and his party raced to the temporary paddock, jumped on their horses and raced down the slopes of Ard-na-said. The path to the sea was all downhill and the galloped at full speed for about 15 minutes until they arrived at Portobello.

What a wonderful and fantastic sight awaited them.

A giant male walrus was swimming about three-hundred metres out from the shoreline – and he wasn't alone.

Flying directly above him his was an enormous fat aquatic-avian creature. Swimming next to him was what looked like a long-necked mammal of some sort, with a fantastic looking bird-like youngster, brightly plumed in reds, yellows and bluish-green down standing imperiously on his back.

Malcolm could not contain his excitement. He ran down to the beach, clapping and jumping with joy and relief at the glorious sight of Napoleon - and what looked like his new family.

Indeed, Napoleon swam to shore and as Malcolm hugged his long-toothed whiskery friend, Napoleon barked and howled like a big slobbering puppy.

Once things had calmed down, Napoleon used his flippers to relate his adventures to Malcolm and introduced his new wife, the mother of all chuckens, their son, the last of the chuckens and finally, he introduced the weirdest creature – even weirder than Napoleon's mate and offspring – that any of them had ever seen.

Napoleon didn't call it anything; in truth, he didn't know what to call it. Malcolm however was well travelled. He wasn't sure, but at the back of his mind, he was aware that he had seen similar creatures roaming the plains of Africa in great herds and the head, neck and legs of this animal were definitely alike these herd animals. But! Good God! The body of the animal was like an onion, with layer upon spiral layer of onion-coloured flesh and hair coiled tightly round at the centre of the distended neck and four legs and onion-like filaments distending down from its bulbous stomach. It was a jaw-dropping sight.

On of Malcolm's mean blurted out in astonishment: "It's an Onion! It's a bloody walking Onion!".

The entire group laughed so hard that their boots started squeaking; which made them laugh even harder; rolling on the sand, grasping their aching stomachs and belching and gasping for breath.

Once they all calmed down, the entire group left the beach and walked up hill to the main town square. Malcolm took Napoleon and his extended family to the castle and provided them with food and lodgings in his stables.

Naming the Newcomers

That night, and for several days following, the collective hum and excitement in the community was palpably electric: who or what were these other-worldly creatures; where did they come from; what do we – can we - call them?

Malcolm thought to himself: I need to calm this down and dilute the wonderment and mystery among the people before it turns to fear and mob panic. He couldn't answer exactly what they are or explain where they came from, without kindling cries of sorcery and bedevilment; superstition has long been a human vice and assassin of progress and enlightenment.

However, he could - and would – give the newcomers a name. He knew from experience that people would accept all kinds of ignorance, just so long as they had a name to give. None of the common folk could speak Latin, yet they would proudly reel off impressive sounding Latin names that the doctor gave them to describe their various maladies, without a care for the meaning of the word.

Likewise, he was sure that by attaching pet-name monikers to these creatures he could take the edge off their strangeness and endear them to the community as their own.

Name 1

Napoleon's mate came first



<pic of Henrietta>

Malcolm made his way to the Family Library to carry out some study on appropriate names for Napoleon's mate, their male offspring and the strange quadruped horsey-doggy creature.

Malcolm reflected on the fact that Napoleon's mate's face, skin and feathers were speckled with ginger freckles. Aha, he mused, in Gaelic we have the female name, Oighrig, which means the Speckled One. However, even in his time, there were many Anglo-Saxon immigrants in the central and south east of Scotland and English was much used, along with Latin, to communicate with foreigners, including the many English that traded with his community. Malcolm referred to a small book he had on name translations from Gaelic to English and saw that Henrietta was among the English derivatives. Perfect, he thought, Napoleon's mate would be called Henrietta (as it turned out, the name was very appropriate as the name "Henrietta" was derived from Old German, meaning home ruler and Henrietta was a bit of a bossy-boots: she would peck and flap at Napoleon to get out of their stable, when she was in a mind to clean up or have some "me-time").

Name 2

Before he addressed the question of what to call Napoleon and Henrietta's "chick", Malcolm's thoughts turned to the eye-popping imagery of the horsey-doggy creature and how he had recalled, at their first encounter, seeing a herd of such creatures in Africa.

This made Malcolm think of his early education in classical literature and he spent the next 4-5 hours poring over ancient writings he had on Roman history and their fascination with exotic menagerie. Eventually, he came across transcriptions from two famous roman historians - Dio and Horace - that both referred to a very odd-looking quadruped that Julius Caesar first brought back to Rome around 46 BC from Alexandria, following his historic meeting with Cleopatra.

The Romans were struck by the chimeric qualities of the animal: Long-necked and snout-faced like a camel and speckled fur like a leopard, which encouraged them to give the creature the hybrid name of camelopard (Giraffa Camelopardalis). Over the centuries, the name contracted to the term Giraffe.

Interesting, thought Malcolm, but that wasn't quite right. This was a rebus-type puzzle: he had to work out the connection between the ancient writings, his memory of the African herd animals and the physical visual reality of the creature.

It looked like a giraffe in outline, it walked like a giraffe and it mostly ate like a giraffe – chewing the top leaves of Rowan and Ash Trees in the surrounding fields. However, it also loved eating onions (see below).

Malcolm mused, once again. Is that what happened, he wondered? Was this just an "ordinary" giraffe that was eating an onion when he was sucked into the portal and properties of the transition had spliced his fundamental biological structure (we would likely say his DNA) and melded it with the onion? You just had to look at the creature, to entertain such a wild notion: it's body spiralling, layered



and distended all round like bulbous onion. Sacre bleu! It even smelled like an onion!

He couldn't just call it a giraffe, it was clearly an Onion-Giraffe. But what to name it? Finally, Malcolm decided to use the first part of the Latin name for the Giraffe genus – and so it came to be known as Camelo, the onion-giraffe.

Name 3

And now we come to bird with the bright plumage. What name would he choose for the plucky Pheasant-tailed issue of Napoleon and Henrietta?



He had an imperious gait and was often seen strutting round the stables and castle courtyard like a majestic prince, so his name had to have a tilt towards an ostentatious ruler. The research he had just completed on Camelo was still fresh in his mind and in a flash, it came to Malcolm. When the fabulous creature first appeared out of the portal and came on shore, he was riding on the back of Camelo: Caesar's Giraffe; his name had to be Caesar!

Voila! The family tree was complete; everyone had a name. Malcolm quickly wrote up a proclamation, declaring their names. Copies were quickly made and distributed throughout the Joppa community. Everyone was happy: their celebrity family had a home and they all had names.

The Joppanese People

In Malcolm's time, Joppa consisted of three villages lying on a contiguous strip of coastland in east-central Scotland, with Joppa at the centre; Port Ablo to the north and Musseltown to the south.

It was here that the Joppanese Scots lived, worked and traded with the rest of the world.

The main industrial activity in Musseltown was harvesting mussels – as you might have guessed – from the shoreline to supplement the local seafood diet. The Musselheids – as they were known - were a lean and wiry people; known for their hardiness, directness and straight-talking honesty.



Port Ablo was known for producing pottery – particularly clay pots. The people were, on average, rotundly proportioned – especially their midriff. Given their main industry was Pottery, the widely used term pot-bellied, was adapted to a more precise epithet, Porty Belly, or Portybellies, when the other Joppa inhabitants were describing people from that neighbourhood.





The potters were highly-skilled craftsmen and would occasionally produce novelty pottery, like this one of Caesar.



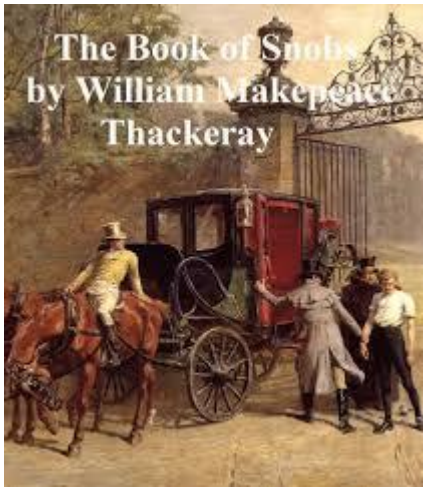
In contract to the peasant earthiness of the Musselheids and the Portybellies, the Joppanese were somewhat uppity in their demeanour; believing their social status to be a significant rank above their dirt-poor neighbours.





After all, the Chief, his Lieutenants and their families all stayed in grand dwellings in Joppa. It was uber-prime property and it would cost you many horses and cattle to purchase land and dwellings there.

The Musselheids and Portybellies were having none of that.



Every opportunity was taken to down-size the Joppanese egos – especially the cygnus artificious characters who would form a procession behind Malcolm on Sunday afternoons, after Church, and parade down the main highway that connected all three towns, dressed in their finery and sitting on their pretty prancing ponies.

As mentioned earlier, Malcolm was well-travelled: an adventurer and explorer who had sailed the high seas from Europe to Asia many times. He usually travelled in a fleet of three, with his ship, The Great Malcolm, as the flagship.



On one of his trips to Asia he met his wife, Ming, a beautiful Oriental woman.

<pic of Sailing Ship and Ming>



Ming often wore exotic Eastern perfumes and bath salts, that were very intoxicating and alluring. Malcolm was earthier – unlike many of his Joppa sycophants - and usually smelt of oats and damp hay.

When they walked out together along the public walkways, their body vapours combined and gave off a pungent aroma.

< pic of Ming and Malcolm>

They were very happy together and quite oblivious of their enjoined olfactory impact on others.

If the local folk were downwind, they could smell the procession before they saw it and would shout out, proclaiming: “Here comes Ming ‘n Malcolm and the Joppa Jobbies!”.

If the processioners were downwind they pretended not to notice and remained po-faced throughout the cavalcade; much to the amusement of the local bystanders.

Napoleon and his Family

Over time, about a year really, Napoleon and his exotic family settled down in Joppa and locals became very comfortable with their foreign immigrants; quite proud indeed, when rubber-neck tourists, from neighbouring districts and beyond, arrived to gawk and wonder at the trans-dimensional oddities.

The habits and antics of the group were frequently observed by the community and a collective fondness for the group developed.

Napoleon

Napoleon loved hunting haddies (haddocks). He would throw them in the air, before gobbling them down in one go. He also tossed a couple of fish onto the beach for Malcolm’s consumption; they would either be eaten fresh or smoked and cured for winter provision.



<Napoleon tossing a haddie in the air>

Henrietta

Henrietta, like Napoleon, was a natural hunter but preferred land pursuits. She would take great delight in chasing timorous beasties through the glistening dew-bejewelled ling at first light. She had sharp eyes like an owl and would be off and swooping in a flash at the sight of the slightest twitch of a blade in the heather-rich fields of grass. This was just a frolic, a caprice, a dynamic game for her; her diet being worms, insects, vegetables and fruit. She had developed a penchant for beer as well, but it made her cross-eyed and clumsy. The local pranksters thought this was hilarious; they would set out

saucers of beer and watch their prank unfold as poor Henrietta's agility, awareness and sureness of foot rapidly declined.

Caesar

Caesar was no ordinary chucken; no, he was a direct descendant of Henrietta, the last of the great, pot-bellied proto-chuckens and the Mother of all chuckens. His father was Napoleon the magnificent. The emperor walrus and renowned explorer; the only living creature to have entered the Joppa Triangle from this side of the multiverse and returned.

Caesar loved the sea. His father was a walrus, after all.

He didn't go under the water, as he had very little oil on his feathers and they would take forever to dry; denying him flight capability in the interim.

His favourite aquatic antic was to paddle along the shoreline, pick up speed until he could run on top of the water (he was fast) and take off; soaring and swooping and hooping like a dafty duck – hehe – what a free spirit he was!

Caesar also developed a penchant for doughnuts. They were quite a new confectionary treat that had been introduced the Joppa community by an Italian immigrant baker called Tony. Tony had travelled back with Malcolm on one of his trading expeditions to the Mediterranean.

He was a skilled baker and businessman. Three times a week – Wednesday, Friday and Sunday – he would load his cart with freshly backed doughnuts and trundle down the main road hollering "Doughnuts! Doughnuts! Freshly baked doughnuts!" in a lilting Italian voice, with undertones of mandolins and accordions ringing in their ears.





Caesar was curious but cautious of this town-crier oddity and gingerly sidled up to Tony's cart. Tony gave Caesar a huge friendly grind and threw a whole doughnut with icing and chocolate towards Caesar. He caught it in his mouth and was cock-as-hoop at the delicious flavours.

From then on, Caesar would come running for his free doughnut as soon as he heard Tony bellowing out his come-and-get-it cry

.

Camelo

There was no doubt Camelo was the oddest of oddities. Apparently, half vegetable and half animal; the first ready-meal, in some folks' minds.

As previously mentioned, not only did his main body look like an onion, Camelo loved to eat them at every opportunity. He would make forays into the local onion-fields, dig them up and eat a whole bushel sometimes, before the crop workers could chase it away. They couldn't catch him; he was too fast – even at a walking gait.

The Origin of the Joppanese Chickens

Perhaps a year (maybe more) went by after Napoleon and his troupe emerged from the Triangle when an Indian sea captain - Manava Palava - sailed into Musseltown Harbour one day, looking to trade goods and exchange gifts with the local people.

Manava was soon introduced to Malcolm and as a peace offering, Manava presented Malcolm with a Red Jungle fowl as a gift and said the bird's name was Ashanti, which means peace in his language. He explained that the eggs of the bird were a great culinary delicacy where he came from.

Malcolm was very grateful and presented Manava with a plaid of his clan tartan, making him an honorary clansman, and a bottle of whisky. The sat and sipped a whisky together while Malcolm studied the bird and her eggs closely. After a few moments thought, Malcolm asked Manava if he had a male mate that would enable him to establish a breeding stock.

Manava sighed, indicating there was a problem forthcoming. He explained that they had only brought one pair of birds with them on the voyage and the fowl's mate had died on the way over. The female was still producing sterile eggs, but there would be no offspring, and over time, the bird's egg production would slow down and become less in number until she died of old age.

Just at that point Caesar returned from his morning frolics and strolled into view. As soon as he caught sight of Ashanti, he started strutting his stuff in front of her - his fantail fully extended in all its glorious colours and majesty; his comb and plumage stiff and erect as he proudly pranced and danced before her. It was obvious he was completely smitten by this Eastern avian treasure.

Malcolm stroked his beard and mused: "Maybe, Aye, just maybe". They both let out a great belly laugh at the thought of the two love-birds creating a new species.

For the first two months Ashanti continued to lay sterile eggs – much more than Malcom and his immediate family could eat, so Malcom's estate started selling them to the local community. They were an instant hit with the locals.

The Scots combined the eggs with square sausage, bacon, tattie scones, black pudding and haggis as a morning meal; perhaps this was the origin of the world-famous Scottish breakfast.

Caesar and Ashanti had their first offspring – the first Joppanese Chickens – after three months. There were six eggs in the first impregnated batch and they all hatched at once. Perhaps that's why eggs are still packaged in multiples of six.

Even to this day Scottish men call Scottish women hen, in honour of this historic union. Many men also take on the nickname Chic or Chick, as a homage to the first chicks born from the mating of Caesar and Ashanti.

The pairing of Caesar and Ashanti produced two new strains; in fact, twin species. Both species were what we now recognise as chicken-brained but their respective appearances were quite different.

The first strain were very similar to the modern-day chicken: yellow-feathered, fluffy and cute at birth; chirping and pecking at anything and everything as they hopped around the coop they were contained in.

The second-strain were radically different. For one, they were born sterile, so could not reproduce. Even at the egg stage you could tell them apart by their mottled shells which were covered in ginger freckles – just like their grandmother, Henrietta.

They were also different in their body shape - a throw-back to Napoleon and Henrietta one might presume. They were hairy, rather than feathered; and black, with long noses, floppy ears and little hairy tails that stood bolt upright.

I kid you not that if they had been born with four legs, as against two, one would be forgiven for mistaking them as tiny fur-balled poodles.

In amongst all that black hair, their little faces were pasty white and covered in freckles: the first and last of the hairy freckled hens.

Naturally, the locals affectionately called them Chicken Poodles.

They soon became quite a delicacy in the local inns and eating houses, with the dinner menus proudly advertising Chicken Poodle Soup for lunch or as a dinner starter. The strain soon died out though, leaving only the ordinary chicken strain that we are familiar with and love today as the most versatile food on the planet.

And so, we come to the end of our tale on the origin of the chucken and the Joppanese chickens.

However, dear reader, this is not the end of the Scottish Chronicles. There are many more fabulous stories to be told and I will gladly relate them to you in future transcriptions.

THE END