

# A friend indeed for those in need



By Baxterbear

## ***Hi, I'm Baxterbear!***

*I was born in Scotland on the 29th of February 1928. As this was a leap year, it means that in 2008 I am either twenty or eighty years old which makes me ageless!*

*I have a torn left ear and a family tartan patch on my right shoulder from one of my many adventures. I am very proud of them as they remind me that it's okay to be different.*

*I can only have one thought at a time and it's always positive. I never hold a grudge as that part of my memory doesn't work very well. Before a memory becomes a grudge it falls out of my head.*

*As I sit in my window, beside Edinburgh Castle on the Royal Mile, I see my favourite building, The Scott Monument, built in memory of famous writer Sir Walter Scott. This has inspired me to write about my own experiences, which I very much hope you'll enjoy!*

*Before I begin, let me thank my wonderful friends who have helped me to write and publish my stories!*

## **A Friend indeed for those in Need**

Once again I'm returning on the No. 31 maroon double-decker bus from Edinburgh Zoo. I find myself in my favourite spot; the front seat of the top deck where I can see everything with my nose pressed firmly against the glass. I never lose the excitement of it! A lady joins me with her granddaughter Scarlett, on the top deck. Her name is Peggy. We were neighbours long ago.

Scarlett is a young girl with bright green eyes, red hair and freckles. We discuss the zoo and the penguin parade and how Sally the elephant is no longer there.

I notice Scarlett is clutching her tummy, she is definitely not very well at all. "Are you all right?" I ask. "I don't know, Baxterbear, I feel terrible and it's not just travel sickness from sitting on the bus". Peggy turns to comfort her, "It's all right Scarlett, we'll soon be home".

Princes Street is approaching so we get off the bus, it doesn't take long to reach Peggy's home. I have been invited for afternoon tea. "Goodness Scarlett, you are not getting any better, the pain is not easing up. Excuse me Baxterbear, I think we need to phone the Doctors' surgery to make an appointment".

Luckily there is a cancellation so we go along to the Doctors' surgery, up the three ancient granite steps to the big welcoming door into a brightly lit room.

The pretty lady behind the reception desk can clearly see that Scarlett is in a lot of pain. "Don't worry, Dr Copp will see you soon" she says.

Dr Copp meets us with a broad smile, he is a tall man with shoulders that fill the doorway and a deep kindly voice. "Well now, come and have a seat. How are you feeling Scarlett?" "I don't feel good Doctor." Scarlett replies.

"Let's try and find out what the problem is. Now just let me take hold of your hand so that I can feel your wrist. That's fine. What I'm doing now is taking your pulse. It tells me how fast your heart is beating and that can help me to find out what's going on inside you."

Dr Copp concentrates quietly for a few moments. At long last, he becomes aware that I am accompanying Scarlett and Peggy. "I see you've got a very handsome friend beside you. What's his name?" I was *tweekled* with his description of me. Before I can respond, Scarlett perks up and answers. "Dr Copp, this is Baxterbear, my friend."

“Good afternoon, Baxterbear. I would like you to sit up here on this couch and I’ll lift Scarlett up beside you. That’s it. Just rest your head back on the pillow, both of you please.” I can’t believe how tightly Scarlett is clutching my paw.

Dr Copp continues his examination, explaining, “Another way that I can find out what might be wrong is to gently press your tummy in different places. Look, I’ll do it to Baxterbear first. He has a nice round tummy”. It’s not that I like to draw attention to my round tummy. I just love shortbread! I never go anywhere without the recipe tied to my paw.

As he moved his hands gently away from my tummy to Scarlett’s, he suggests, “If I press a bit that feels uncomfortable or sore, just you shout out Scarlett.” A low groan escapes Scarlett’s lips.

Dr Copp gently carries on with his examination. “I think you’ll be fine. Just to make sure, I’d like to get what’s called a second opinion and send you to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, it’s not far from here and you will meet Dr MacPherson. With his experience I hope he’ll be able to reassure us that there is nothing seriously wrong.”

Turning to me, Dr Copp asks, “Now Baxterbear, please could you stay with Scarlett? I’m sure Dr MacPherson would like to meet you too!” “Roger, understood.” I said, ready for duty.

A telephone call later, we are in a black cab on our way to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. We have to wait a little while before we are shown into Dr MacPherson's room, a bright cheerful room with lots of colourful painted animal murals.

Peering over his half moon glasses, Dr MacPherson welcomes us in. "Good afternoon. Come in and sit down," he says.

Gosh, I've never seen anyone with half moon glasses. I wonder if all doctors in Sick Children's Hospitals wear them! The doctor then asked enquiringly "and who's this charming furry gentlemen? Does he have a name?"

"Yes," I say "I'm Baxterbear."

Dr MacPherson quietly and gently examines Scarlett, chatting all the time to explain what he is doing. It is at this time that I start to reminisce about old adventures from many years ago.

When in India, I had to go to hospital as my shoulder had all the stuffing coming out of it. A nurse made me a tartan patch out of my friend Eric's scarf and carefully sewed it on. She tried very hard not to hurt me. The nurse kindly stitched my torn ear as best she could.

Waking me from my daydreaming, Dr MacPherson addresses us all in a very comforting manner, “I did wonder whether this might be what used to be called a grumbling appendix. In order to be sure that it’s not going to get worse, I’d like you to stay here with us in hospital for one night. “That will be a small adventure for you and Baxterbear.”

I’m a bear who is always ready for an adventure. As the Doctor went to leave, I couldn’t help noticing he had a watch with a sort of snake symbol I’d never seen before. “Is that a special watch?” I asked him, curious. “Ah, Baxterbear.” He replied, showing me the watch more closely. “This is a special kind. It is called a MedicAlert watch.” “Is that because you are a doctor?” I asked. Dr MacPherson laughed.

“No Baxterbear. Anyone with a medical condition can wear one of these. If I hurt myself, this will tell other doctors about my medical history, even if I cannot. It is a very important signal that people, doctors, nurses and paramedics recognise.

It alerts them to their patient’s condition and helps doctors to treat them more effectively.” I was *treekled*. To me, this watch seemed very like the shortbread recipe I wore around my wrist. It could tell cooks about my love of shortbread, even if I could not!

As Peggy leaves us, I assure Scarlett that I will stay with her. I asked Dr MacPherson if only Doctors wore these watches.

“No, not at all!” He replied. “There are watches for men, women and children, and also pendants and bracelets.” I thought this seemed like a very good idea indeed!

A nurse with a badge, Morag, takes us along the corridor into the ward and introduces us to the fair haired young boy in the next bed. “Ollie, this is Scarlett and Baxterbear.” Looking me straight in the eyes, the nurse continues, “It is especially good to have you here Baxterbear. We don’t always have as much time as we would like to stop and talk to our young patients. Perhaps you will be able to cheer all of them up in the same way that you have clearly cheered Scarlett up.” I was *treekled*, she made me feel a most important and useful bear.

“Yes” I agreed. “I’m off to introduce myself right now to the children who aren’t lucky enough to have anyone visiting them.” I meet another boy called Ben who is waiting to see a Doctor.

He is sad because he has been teased at school due to his eczema, which is a skin condition that causes people great discomfort and lots of itching. I was *gasperated!*

How can people tease somebody about something like that, when in my mind Ben is very brave. I tell him that what he needs is for me to come to his school. I would be his friend. All his other school friends would soon understand. He will not be laughed at, just look at the tartan patch on my shoulder and my ripped ear!

I return from my rounds, greeting everyone with a friendly “Hello”. Scarlett immediately says, “Come and listen to Ollie, he had a... what was it called again Ollie?”

“An MRI scan” Ollie explains to us, “It’s a huge piece of equipment like a shining tunnel on a table, you lie on the floor of the tunnel and they slowly slide you in”.

“Weren’t you a bit scared?” asks Scarlett. No, they tell you everything that is happening, you don’t feel a thing. You just have to lie still. The only thing that makes you a bit worried is the noise the machine makes when it’s switched on. It groans and grinds like the sounds of a battleship breaking up and sinking.”

A little later, Peggy arrives back with some shortbread, which we all share and she tells us that she will be back in the morning. The nurse asks “Baxterbear, will you keep an eye on all the children in the ward?” “Yes, yes” I exclaim “and I will be the proudest bear in Edinburgh!” I’m thoroughly *treekled* by her request.

In our hospital bed, as the lights are dimmed, Scarlett turns to give me a hug and we both fall asleep, her arm around me and my paw on her shoulder.

I wake up bright and early the next morning. I go off to see all the other children. On my return I find Scarlett in great spirits, the pain has disappeared! Dr MacPherson makes a gentle examination of Scarlett's tummy and pronounces the inflammation completely cleared up and Scarlett can go home.

Dr MacPherson kindly turns to me and says "Baxterbear, it has been absolutely brilliant having you here in our hospital. You have been a great help to the children.

My chest swells with pride at Dr MacPherson's words. Helping people to feel better makes me very *trekkled* indeed!

Further Baxterbear experiences can be found at: **[baxterbear.com](http://baxterbear.com)**

## Some of My Turns of Phrase!

|                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>confuddled</i> | total lack of understanding |
| <i>gasperated</i> | exasperated                 |
| <i>treekled</i>   | very happy                  |

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