

This photo, I believe, was taken in the summer of 1952 and the occasion was probably the Highland Games at The Meadows in Dornoch.

On the left is my young brother George Mackay, then Isobel Ross, then myself, Kenneth Mackay and on the right Selina Ratell. George and I were then living in Glasgow with our parents and siblings but spent our summer holidays with Embo relatives. Isobel Ross was London born and resident there, but her parents were from Embo, and she too spent most summer holidays in Embo. Isobel's first cousins in Embo were Isobel, Nan, Jimmie and Donnie Sutherland whose home was next to the "Old Nurses Home". Selina lived at 9 Terrace Street with her mother, who was Embo born, and her older brother Kenneth. Her father, who I think was English, spent long periods of time working away from home. Kenneth (Kenny) Ratell became quite famous in Embo during the 1956 Suez Crisis. He was then doing his National Service in an army unit. On about the 5TH November 1956 one of the National newspapers carried a photo of a British army landing craft approaching an Egyptian held beach in the Suez Canal zone. And who was standing in the front of the vessel? It was none other than Embo's Kenny Ratell with his well-known toothy grin all over his face. The Anglo French invasion of the Canal Zone, a few days after Israel attacked Egypt, caused a world outcry. The claim was that the British and French were attempting to regain their past imperial glories. A short time later the British and French forces withdrew and the Israeli army followed them a few months later. The whole debacle led to the resignation of the then British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden. Interestingly, I have an American relative who was then serving in the US Navy. At that time he was stationed on a US navy ship off the Spanish Coast. He claims that their orders at that time were to intervene to make the British and French leave the Suez Canal zone. Luckily they did leave, before such drastic action was necessary...or perhaps knowledge of this US intention was the cause of the move.

