
Bitesize History - People

Gilbert Dempster Fisher (1906-1985) alias The Hut Man



The family came to Lochwinnoch at the end of World War 1 and settled at West Knockbartnock.

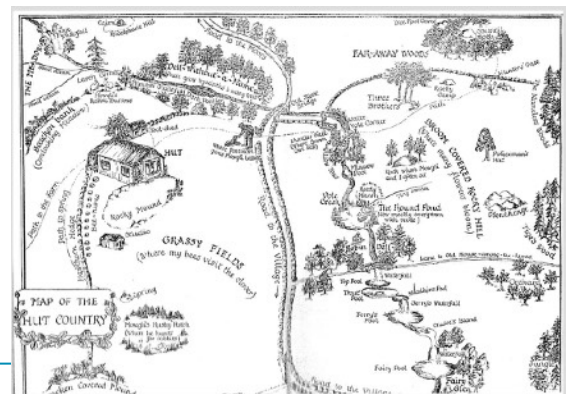
He was elected member of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1936. Around that time, not far from the family home, he built a wooden hut which he lived in, giving him the nick-name "The Hut Man"

He published "The Hut-Man's Book" in 1938.

In 1940 he married Ellen Shaw.

As the BBC's "Hut Man", Gilbert Dempster Fisher was a pioneer of radio broadcasting for children in Scotland in the 1940s and 1950s. Also a successful author of children's books on natural history, he based both his writings and his broadcasts on his observations of the wildlife that surrounded his isolated hut near Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire.

His radio broadcasts under the persona of the Hut Man began on the BBC Home Service in Scotland on Monday 12 January 1948. The programme on Children's Hour was called 'Hut-Country Walks' and it featured two children exploring the Hut Country with the Hut Man. It was later



called 'Exploring the Hut Country' and was broadcast every month or so. This 'Hut Country' programme was very popular and he used his celebrity status to pioneer nature studies in Scottish schools. The last 'Exploring the Hut Country' programme was broadcast on 19 June 1956.

Devoted to pedagogy, he established "The Hut-Man's Club" for children in the late 1930s and was foremost in the encouragement of natural history in Scottish schools. He also wrote poetry for young children and, from 1947 to 1950, he produced 'The Children's Magazine'



During the last decade of his "Hut life" he was engaged by Scottish local education authorities to speak in schools and residential camps about nature study, captivating children with his "Hut Man" tales. He also engaged with teachers to help them deliver natural history lessons, writing a comprehensive guide book on the subject.

"The Teacher's Book of Nature Study"

In 1956 he was appointed Director-Secretary of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland administering Edinburgh Zoo.

Among his publications were ...

A Number of Things: Verses for children.

Adventure in the Hut Country.

Children's Book of British Birds.

Exploring the Hut Country.

